

THE
EXPERIENCE
AND
LABOURS
OF
JAMES ROGERS,
PREACHER OF THE GOSPEL:
INCLUDING AN
A C C O U N T
OF
HIS FIRST WIFE,
Mrs. Martha Rogers.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

*He knoweth the way that I take: When he hath tried
me, I shall come forth as Gold.*

JOB.

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EXPERIENCE, &c.

SINCE I first began to recommend the GREAT LOVE OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS to others, I have had many solicitations to give some account of his dealings with my own soul, yet I could never prevail on myself to attempt it till now. And, having kept no regular journal, it cannot be expected that the following pages should contain any thing more than a recital of a few particular circumstances which made the deepest impression upon my mind at the time they occurred. If these, or any of them, are made a blessing to my friends, let them give God the glory.

I was born in the North-Riding of Yorkshire, in a large village called Marfk, in February 1749. I was put to school early, and taught to read the scriptures from a child; in some part of which I found singular delight. The Spirit of God began to strive with me when I was about three or four years old. On hearing a passing-bell, or seeing a corpse, I was very thoughtful, and would often ask my parents pertinent questions about a future state. On seeing lightning, or hearing a loud clap of thunder, my fears were usually alarmed to a great degree;—and the more so, as an impression always followed me, that it was God speaking from the clouds; and I expected at these times, that he was just descending to judge the world; yea, I would even run to the door to see him come! Such ideas as these were much increased and confirmed by several dreams which I had in my infancy, about death, judgment, heaven, and hell.

When I was about ten years of age, I dreamed one night, I saw fire bursting out of the earth in several parts; that it raged so furiously, and spread with such rapidity, that in a few seconds, the whole globe was but one blaze! I thought I saw all the inhabitants of the place where I lived, struck with inexpressible consternation and horror; and especially the bad people, (as I called them) whom I had known to curse and swear, and get drunk; with many of my play-fellows, who were accustomed to lie and cheat, and play on the Sabbath: these I thought set up such dreadful shrieks and yells, as were enough to pierce a heart of stone. As I looked up, the face of the sky seemed totally overspread with blackness. Instantly the forked lightnings began to play, till the heavens were all in one glare, and such loud peals of thunder followed, as I had never heard. The sun I could see no more: but I thought I got a transient sight of the moon, which appeared larger than I had ever seen it before, and as red as a huge mass of blood. The heavens seemed all in motion, and were exceedingly agitated; they appeared to work, and heave, and rock from side to side, till not one star was left remaining: so was that scripture verified—*And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely leaves, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.* The sky seemed next to pass away, or, (as I remembered to have read) *to be wrapped together as a scroll.* My favourite passage, *Dan. vii. 9, 10.* I now saw fulfilled.—*And the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool, his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire: a fiery stream issued and came forth from before him. Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The judgment was set, and the books were opened.* The thought I had about the deplorable state of my guilty neighbours, now seemed swallowed up in a most painful anxiety for my own safety. I was waiting in expectation of a summons to the bar; but, being deeply conscious that I was unprepared, I was alarmed to such a degree that I awoke.

After recollecting myself a little, and finding I was still an inhabitant of this world, my joy was inexpressible! Nevertheless, it had a most solemn effect upon my mind, and the impression remained for many weeks. How true are those words in the thirty-third chapter of *Job*!—*God speaketh once, yea twice, when man perceiveth it not: in adream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in*

slumberings upon the bed ; then he openeth the ears of men, and scaleth their instruction. From this time I began to feel great desires to be taught how I might obtain a preparation to meet my Judge with comfort.

On the winter evenings, several neighbours frequently came to sit and spend an hour in friendly conversation with my father, and often spoke upon religious subjects, according to their light. To these I was very attentive ; and when my hour for bed came, I would beg hard to sit a little longer, though I had not courage to urge the chief reason which induced me ; namely, a desire to hear what might be said upon these matters. I remember one night in particular, many queries were proposed about salvation : None of them thought it possible that any certainty could be attained in this life, whether they should be saved at last or not. But the general opinion was, that our actions would all be weighed in the day of judgment ; and if our good deeds over-balanced our bad ones, we should go to heaven ; but if the contrary, we should go to hell. Some dissented a little from this, and thought—nay, but God was merciful, and had sent his Son to die for sinners ; and that their best way would be to amend their lives, and do all they could, and Christ would make up the rest. One of these they *all* agreed must be the way ; and to confirm themselves in this conclusion, they observed, that the PARSON of the parish was exactly of the same mind.

I endeavoured to satisfy myself with these determinations, but I could not.—It was all, alas ! left at uncertainty ; and this would not do, for one that was daily expecting a call to appear before the Judge of quick and dead ! However, I thought no way so likely to succeed, as to say my prayers regularly morning and evening, and be as careful as possible in restraining from bad words ; especially, from telling lies, playing on the Sabbath-day, neglecting my book, quarreling with my school-fellows, doing any thing I was taught to believe was wrong, or keeping company with such wicked boys as led me into the way of such temptations.

At eleven years of age I was called to bear a severe trial, by the death of one of the tenderest and best of fathers. He had been subject for many years to what they called the *heart cholic*, and was often apparently near death. At such times, when every other hope seemed to fail, I would get into a corner, fall down upon my knees, and there *pray* and *weep* and *wrestle* with God to spare his life ; and though

I knew not the Lord, yet I often felt a confidence that he heard me, and would grant my request : and when I found it so, such gratitude and uncommon sweetness would rest upon my mind for many days, as is better felt than expressed :—However, he died at last of that disorder, after a few days illness. For some time I was quite inconsolable; and had I been possessed of the whole world, I would gladly have given it all to have died with him, so I had been prepared ! But as I knew I was not, I earnestly begged of my eldest brother (then upwards of twenty) to tell me what I must do to be saved ; believing, as soon as I was ready for heaven, God would certainly take me, which was all I wished for.—But, alas ! I gained no ground, for want (I believe) of proper instruction ; for, as yet the light of the glorious gospel had not shined in that neighbourhood.

My father leaving no WILL, (an *egregious* neglect in any parent) and his property consisting chiefly of land, it fell of course to my eldest brother, so that the family soon after became dispersed. I was removed to some distance among strangers, but I found favour in their sight, and was suffered to want for nothing. Here I got a new set of acquaintance, but equally destitute of the knowledge of God. It pleased Him, however, whose ways are in the mighty waters, and his judgments in the great deep, to find means to teach me the knowledge of his salvation.

A wild young man, a few doors from where I lived, contrary to the will of his parents, and against the advice of all his friends, would go to sea ; but he had not been there long before he was heartily weary, and ran away from his master. He was ashamed, however, to return home, and equally afraid of being known, as it was in the height of the French war, when the press was very hot. He therefore set out for some inland town, and took up his residence for some months in Northampton. Here the poor prodigal had time for reflection, and began to think on the mercies he had slighted in his father's house. By this strange chain of providences it was that he became acquainted with the Methodists, a small body of whom were in this place. He was invited by them to hear preaching, and soon afterwards went constantly. His conscience being thoroughly awakened, he joined their little society, and became a steady member.

After several months, he took courage, and wrote home to his friends. His father (always tender over him) was filled with joy to hear of his long lost son, and went to the captain he had sailed with, got his indenture at a confi-

derable expence, and the matter was made up; which happy circumstance no sooner reached the young man, than he let off, and returned to his father's house with a glad heart. His old acquaintance flocked to see him upon his arrival, and expected feasting and merriment, and, as they call it, great doings!—But the tables were now turned. He began to exhort us all to flee from the wrath to come! enforcing the necessity of repentance and the new birth—that old things must be done away; and all things become new: and observed, that instead of eating and drinking, singing and dancing, we ought rather to fall upon our knees, and give God thanks that we were not in hell.

His former companions gaped and stared at him as a monster, and some of them came near him no more, swearing he was turned Methodist, that his brain was touched, and if they did not keep from him, he would convert them all, and make *them* as mad as himself! But these things had a very different effect upon me; I looked upon him as some angelic being dropped from the clouds, and was affected in an extraordinary manner while he was speaking to the rest. But, as he took no notice of me, I concluded I was too vile for such a favourite of heaven to stoop to. I went away trembling and speechless, seeking a place to vent my grief; but it enhanced my misery when I found I could not weep, for my heart seemed black as hell, and as hard as a stone. I prayed again and again, but (as I thought) to little purpose. However, I was clearly convinced that this was the way, and there was no other; but I thought it was impossible I should ever feel the happiness that young man experienced, unless I could go to those *people*, and that *place* where he found so blessed a change. I enquired what distance Northampton was, thinking to set out unknown to any one, having a degree of confidence God would take care of me; but finding it was near two hundred miles, and being not yet fourteen years of age, I was quite discouraged; and no longer able to contain my sorrow, I begged one of the family with whom I resided, to intercede for me with the young man, that he would *only* speak to me; thinking that if he would take notice of such an unworthy creature, I should be one of the happiest of mortals! To my great surprize, he not only embraced the first opportunity of speaking to me, but seemed to rejoice over me as one that had found great spoil. This brought to my mind that scripture, *There shall be joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.* And as with them, so I proved it to

be with his children here on earth. From that time I date my acquaintance with the people of God, and to this day I have preferred them to all others. With what gratitude and delight have I often reflected upon, and repeated those lines,

“ What a mercy is this,
 What a heaven of bliss,
 How unspeakably happy am I !
 Gather'd into the fold,
 With thy people enroll'd,
 With thy people to live and to die ! ”

The first Methodist Society I had any acquaintance with, was in Gisborough, a small market-town in the north of Yorkshire, about eight miles from where I then lived. This was the nearest place where I could hear preaching. I always walked on foot, although the road was not very pleasant, having to pass over several rugged mountains, and through lonely woods, on dark winter nights, sometimes stormy enough :—But my need was such, I never thought a moment on these discouragements. Sometimes I had company—sometimes I had none ; yet I do not remember (when business would permit) I ever omitted going once every fortnight on the Tuesday evening, which was all the preaching we had. Some time after this, two or three of us began to think, if possible, to get preaching at our own village. We spoke to the preachers, who appeared very willing to make a trial, and accordingly visited us occasionally a few times. The word was attended with power, and they soon joined about fifteen of us in a class, and afterwards took us into their plan. We now thought ourselves highly honoured indeed !—Our little number increased to about twenty ; and then the enemy, who had hitherto been pretty quiet, began to shew himself. His chief attack was upon the little few that were united together to *work out their own salvation with fear and trembling*. Against these he roared horribly !—At our preachings and public meetings, the sons of Belial would assemble in a most shameful and tumultuous manner ; but were never permitted to hurt any one, although they spoke many great swelling words !

One time, when a friend was at prayer, and I and a few more were kneeling by him, a big old woman, with vengeance in her countenance, advanced, having a sharp broad axe, (such as carpenters hew wood with) with many dreadful imprecations against the Methodists !—She cursed dreadfully, and swore she would be the death of some one, if she was hanged for it the next hour !—She stood with her arms

with her arms extended ; no one offered to oppose her, but we prayed the more fervently, till just as she appeared to be making a blow at the young man's head then at prayer, the axe fell to the floor, as if the use of her hands were perfectly taken away, and she retired as fast as she could into another room, still cursing the youth for being the ruin of her son and daughter, as she was sure those "false prophets would never have come there but for him, and she did not know where it would stop, but was sure the devil would get them all," with many such expressions.—Not long after this, she was called to give up her accounts to God !

But these persecutions because of the word proved a sifting time, and many who countenanced preaching at first, appeared, by and by, to have been mere *stony ground hearers*. Nay, even our own society was soon diminished to ten persons. These held out for a few months, till the leader and his wife, with the man also who took in the preachers, were taken to *Abraham's bosom*. These three going in so short a time as a few months, was an awful visitation ! Those of us that remained, proving unfaithful, the candlestick was soon after removed to another place. Two or three of us followed it, and continued for a little time ; but, shortly, *our love waxed cold also*.

I was now fifteen years of age ; but not yet able to say, my sins were forgiven. Nevertheless, my desires were strong, and often did the Lord give me a foretaste of his love ; but having no one near to speak to, the adversary gained advantage over me :—I gave way by little and little, till my old companions observing me less grave and circumspect, began to solicit me to join with them as formerly. This I refused for a time, but not with the resolution and steadfastness I had done before, so it only encouraged them to use other means of gaining me over. With what shame and sorrow of heart do I still reflect, that in a little time I joined them in parties of pleasure, and went from bad to worse, till I became tenfold more a child of hell than ever ! For, having once given way, my conscience became my constant tormentor day and night. I compared myself to that unhappy spirit, who, being cast out of his habitation, *went about seeking rest, yet finding none*. Thus I continued for upwards of two years, posting, as if in haste for damnation, with a lighted candle in my own hand ; striving to still my conscience with repeated acts of disobedience ! The Spirit of God seemed for a time as if he had given me up, till I left the place where I had lived upwards of five years,

and removed to another village, called Newton-under-Of-bury, where there was a small society of sincere Christians, with monthly preaching, a public meeting, and a class on the Lord's-day. Here the Lord began to strive with me again, but *I fought against him, and still grieved his holy Spirit*. I removed from thence to Stockton-upon-Tees. Upon my arrival here I began to reflect upon my folly ;—conscience was awakened once more, and I obeyed its dictates so far as to join the society : but, seeing my class-leader intoxicated with liquor, I was offended, and went near him no more.

After spending near one year in this place, in 1768 I removed to Whitby, where was a large and flourishing society. I felt very unsettled and unhappy, till at last I resolved, God being my Helper, to join that loving people. But then I thought I was too vile, and was greatly discouraged by reflecting on my repeated backslidings for upwards of four years :—I doubted I should never stand long. However, my convictions increased so that I could take no rest neither day nor night, till I sent for *William Ripley*, a man whose memory will long be precious to *that* society, and to *me*. I expected him to have accused me with my past ingratitude to God and his people ; but, not a word of this :—no ; he saw me labouring under the weight of a wounded spirit, and the comfort he administered to me at that time was a cordial to my soul. Without asking me any questions, he bowed his knee before God, to write a note to admit me into the society ; which I received with a trembling hand, fearing my poor unfaithful heart would again start aside as a broken bow.—But, glory be to God ! he was better to me than all my fears. In five days after this he blessed me with what I never knew before ; namely, a clear sense of pardon.

This was on Feb. 6, 1769, about ten o'clock in the evening. I believe I might have received this blessing *years* before, when under those first awakenings of the Spirit of God, had I fallen into the same hands ; but the people I was first connected with, though very serious and devout, were less evangelical in their sentiments. I had still retained a notion that my repentance was not sufficient ; that I must be much more in earnest ; feel more terror, more sorrow, deeper convictions, &c. before I could possibly obtain a sense of pardon. This my friends in Whitby soon discerned, and told me, that if God saw it necessary, he would deepen my convictions ; but for me to pray for this, and to wait a little and a little longer, before I would dare to look for his fa-

your, was the ready way to lose even the distress I then felt. They therefore told me I must pray for nothing but a sense of the favour of God. Two of them vehemently urged me to embrace the promises by faith;—assured me all things were ready, and insisted that I must, that *very* night, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and I should certainly be saved. At first, I thought them so wild in their notions, and so unreasonable in their demands, that I could scarce refrain from being angry. My carnal nature spurned at it, because I thought it as impossible for me to believe, as to pull the sun from the firmament! However, when they had talked to me thus for near two hours, I was exceedingly affected; and trembling between hope and fear, I begged, in a degree of agony, that they would pray for me. Accordingly, we all kneeled down.—That precious and zealous man of God, *John Rogers*, prayed first:—Every word he uttered my heart felt; and I firmly believed, God would grant him his heart's desire. In that solemn moment, all the sufferings of Christ came to my mind!—By the eye of faith I had as *real* a view of my LORD'S AGONY ON CALVARY, as ever I had of any object by the eye of sense:—I saw his hands and his feet nailed to the cross; his head crowned with thorns; and his side pierced with the soldier's spear—with innumerable drops of blood falling from different parts of his body, and his dear face all covered therewith. But oh! what a look was that!—Such an inexpressible degree of approbation was communicated to my soul thereby, as I trust I shall *never* forget!—While I now recollect it, my overflowing heart and eyes almost forbid my proceeding.—In *that moment* my burden was gone; my heart was changed from bondage into glorious liberty:—The love I felt for God and all mankind was inexpressibly great, and I was constrained to cry with holy *David*, *Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.* It seemed to me as if I had never known happiness till now, and I could hardly think it possible I should learn war any more.—

“ I rode on the sky,
 Freely justified I,
 Nor envi'd *Elijah* his seat;
 My soul mounted higher
 In a chariot of fire,
 And the moon it was under my feet.”

“ I now went about among my old acquaintance, with a confidence that they would all repent and be converted, if they did but know how ready Christ was to save them.

Some I found willing to hear what I had got to say ; others stared at me as one quite out of my senses : however, as nothing could discourage me, if I found them unwilling to let me pray with them, I would drop on my knees on the floor, and praise God for what he had done for me, and pray that he would let them see their wants, and give them all to experience the same blessing which I enjoyed. It pleased God to work powerfully at that time, especially among the young people ; many of whom came from a considerable distance to hear the word. I and some others had great delight in accompanying them on their way home.— Nor can I reflect on those seasons without singular pleasure, when we sang the praises of God as we walked along: and when at parting, we kneeled down in the fields, or on the sea-shore, and commended each other to the grace of God. This was in the twentieth year of my age.

About this time, the Lord raised up several witnesses of entire sanctification, whose daily walk and conversation did honour to their profession. With some of these I often conversed, and they would frequently speak of the blessedness of this salvation from in-bred sin. I did not fully understand them at first, but thought I was as happy as I could be ; nor did I know I wanted any thing which I had not received. However, not many days after this, being closely tempted, I was convinced, that although the guilt of sin was done away, yet there was in me the remains of an evil nature :— and although I was happy in a sense of acceptance, and had power also over inward and outward sin, yet the fountain of corruption was not dried up ;—that I had yet a degree of the carnal mind, which is enmity against God. And had I not been told that this was consistent with a state of justification, it is probable I should have cast away my confidence, as the enemy strongly suggested, my experience was all a delusion. The attack was severe while it lasted, for I reasoned with the temptation till my soul was in an agony ; but in my distress I cried unto the Lord, and he graciously heard me, *and delivered me out of all my fears* ; so that my evidence of pardon was more distinct and clear than ever :— As I believed the report ; and cordially received the testimony of the happy few who professed sanctification, I felt strong desires awakened in my soul for that inestimable blessing ; and being daily urged by some of these to press after it, and expect it every moment by faith alone ; in a little time my thirst was such that I could not rest ; but, in whatever place or company I was,

“ My vehement soul cried out opprefs’d,
 Impatient to be freed ;
 Nor could I, no, nor would I rest,
 Till I was free indeed.”

In reading the scriptures I was more and more enlightened to see, and encouraged to hope for a deliverance from the root of sin. I saw there was given unto me exceeding great and precious promises, that I should be made a partaker of the divine nature ; and that the great end for which our Lord was manifested in the flesh, was *to destroy the works of the Devil, to make an end of sin, and to bring in everlasting righteousness*. And I farther perceived, that not only the promise of God, but his oath also, was given of old to his covenant people, *That they should be delivered out of the hands of their enemies, that they might serve him without fear, in righteousness and holiness before him all the days of their life*. From the manner this is introduced in the New Testament, I was led to infer two things : First, that the enemies there meant were our sins ; especially the evils of our own heart : And, secondly, that the design of God is not to defer the destruction of these till death, or even till some little time before it, but that *now is the accepted time*. For he here declares his will is, that we should *thus* serve him all the remaining part of our life *in holiness, and without fear* : which St. John in his first epistle, iv. 18. says, we cannot do until we are first made perfect in love. Indeed, the whole Bible seemed calculated to raise my expectation of an answer to that prayer—*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me*. And the more I contrasted the spirituality of the law with my own corrupt nature, the greater need I saw of heart-holiness, and the more eager were my desires after it.

At last I resolved neither to eat nor sleep, until the Lord should give me the thing my soul longed for ! I had no sooner made that resolution, than I was tempted to reason upon the rashness of it. But such was the condescension of God, that he indulged my importunity, and granted my request.—I went with a trembling heart to the very house where it had pleased him to shed abroad his pardoning love in my soul. That pious family no sooner learned my errand, than they encouraged me to expect the blessing that hour ; and exhorted me to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for full salvation. We then fell on our knees, and *Mary Best*, an aged woman, full of faith and love, wrestled and pleaded

with the Lord for me. In less than fifteen minutes my burden was removed, and I felt a more *entire* change than I had ever done, accompanied with a peculiar humbling sweetness; but not that rapturous joy which I had always thought would attend that *perfect liberty*. On this account I was tempted much to reason: and it is probable, the enemy would have wrested away my shield, but for the comforting interposition of my friends, who were not, like me, ignorant of Satan's devices. They told me, it was a *common case*, that a soul might be saved from sin, and not filled with joy:—That the blessing of christian perfection consists in feeling I AM NOTHING, and Christ is ALL IN ALL. This I found true by happy experience, and was enabled henceforth to retain a full assurance of this great salvation. In this glorious liberty I walked for at least three months: during which time, notwithstanding I had many fiery darts shot at me, yet I could sing,

“Not a cloud can arise

To darken the skies,

Or hide for a moment my Lord from my eyes.”

When I looked for those heart-rifings of anger, pride, and self-will, which, like dry tinder, were formerly ready to catch fire at any provocation, I found them not; but, on the contrary, I found meekness, humility, and resignation. I was so truly humbled with a sense of my own nothingness, that I rejoiced to suffer reproach for the name of Christ. That natural enmity to the pure law of God being now totally removed, his commandments became more joyous than ever; and I could say in a sense that I never could before, *The law of God is in my heart*, even the LAW OF LOVE. I felt this the constraining principle which led me to *do* and *suffer* the whole will of God. But at the same time I felt my ignorance and helplessness, together with the weakness and unworthiness which attended my past services: hence my daily cry was, “Every moment, Lord, I want the merit of thy death.”—And, blessed be God, I felt it applied. Through faith in his blood, I had constant access to the Father, through the Spirit; yea, and I had FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER AND THE SON, BY THE HOLY GHOST.

My love to God was accompanied with fervent desires for the salvation of immortal souls, and with a conviction that I was called of God to preach the Gospel. I thought, if I could explain to others what I *then* felt, they would *all* repent and be converted! I was at this time a considerable

distance from my relations ; and as my first care was for their salvation, I could not rest till I reached my native place, being *fully* persuaded, that *I had a message from God unto them.* I got a considerable number of my friends together, and standing up, for the first time, in my father's house, I faithfully warned them, in the best manner I could, to flee from the wrath to come.—All seemed astonished, and some were much affected. But, alas ! it was not as I expected : I did not find it so easy a matter to convert them from the error of their ways as I imagined : I plainly saw, *this power belongeth unto God alone !* However, it pleased him to give me some encouragement : for, the second time I met them, while at the last prayer, the house was filled with groans and cries, till at length one exclaimed, (namely, my sister-in-law) “ Glory be to God ! glory be to God !—He hath blessed me !—He hath set my soul at liberty !—I can praise him, and I will praise him !—O praise God for me !—Praise him !—Praise him !—Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord !” and so she went on for a considerable time.

This greatly encouraged me ; but Satan seemed very unwilling I should proceed, and therefore endeavoured to throw hindrances in my way. I then removed from the family I had been so much blessed with, to another, which, though much longer professing religion, yet was less alive to God. Here I fell into a snare, which brought my soul into great heaviness ; and, parleying with temptation, I lost my confidence, and became almost distracted for a season. During this time of sore conflict, one night I had the following dream. I thought I was bit by a large serpent, which wound I knew to be very dangerous, and that unavoidable death would ensue, if a speedy cure could not be effected : but where to go for it I knew not. I was in an agony of distress, when one told me of a Physician at some distance, who *alone* could cure the bite of that serpent. On this, I determined to go to him immediately ; but when I got to the door, I saw an innumerable multitude of serpents, through the midst of which I must pass. My torture and perplexity being inexpressible, I turned into the house again : but reflecting that if I stayed there, death was the *certain* consequence, and that I could but die if I went ; and considering, that *if* the Physician could cure the first wound, he could also cure the rest, I resolved to push through at all hazards, and so ran with all my might. At last, coming to the Phy-

Scian, he received me with kindness, and applied a balmy medicine which immediately relieved my pain, and removed the inflammation. I was now concerned, lest the serpents I had seen upon the road, should assault me on my return : but he bid me be of good courage, anointed my whole body with the same balm, and said, it would prevent their wounding me, though they might assault ; but if they *should* wound me, he bid me return to him again. On this I thanked him, and with a grateful heart took my leave.

By this dream I was convinced that I ought to leave that family, and therefore resolved to do it without delay. I had no sooner fixed this determination, than a glimpse of hope was darted into my soul, and I saw that JESUS was the Physician. Believing that he was both able and willing to heal my wound, I retired (as was my daily custom at that hour) to read and pray ; when the Lord, instead of upbraiding me, applied the precious balm of his blood, and restored the joy of his salvation to my distressed soul. Taking my Bible, and lifting up my heart to heaven, I opened on the seventh chapter of St. John, and coming to that passage, *Jesus stood up in the great day of the feast and cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink ; I shall never forget the manner in which those words were applied to my soul.—It was as if the Lord Jesus Christ personally spoke them. If he had, it was not possible my assurance could have been greater, that all my backslidings were healed.*

“ Stung by the Scorpion sin,
My poor expiring soul
The balmy fount drank in,
And was at once made whole :
I saw my Lord upon the tree,
And felt again he died for me.”

I now left Whitby, and went to reside about five miles distant. Here Providence cast my lot with a most agreeable, happy family ; and the Lord confirmed what he had wrought. The holy flame was such in my heart, that I went to the neighbouring villages, and standing up in the open streets, warned sinners to flee from the wrath to come. I met with some discouragements, especially from old dry professors, who concluded I ran *too fast* to run long : but in less than six months, it pleased God to raise a society in Lythe, a village about a mile distant from where I resided. We procured a comfortable place to preach in, and the Lord added daily to our number. I then solicited the Travelling Preachers to visit us, and soon after, they gave us one night in a month. The enemy had long strove to prevent the gos-

pel from taking root in that wicked place ; but now, seeing the word mightily prevail, he raged with redoubled fury. Some ruffians combined to prevent my preaching, and were determined to carry their point. But, as I was not afraid of man, and the few whom God had raised up, being *resolved* to stand by me, I regarded not their threats.

After repeatedly disturbing us in our preaching-house, one night these sons of *Belial* collected all their forces, to make a general attack as we came out. Their number was great, and I had no sooner dismissed the people, than they began the assault. Hearing this, I pushed forward from the pulpit, and got into the midst of them. They saluted me with volleys of oaths, and showers of stones and dirt ; and in less than two minutes fell to blows. One of the stoutest of them advanced, and made several strokes at my head ; but I received them upon my arm, which, by that means, was much bruised. When he could not bring me to the ground, he raged like a fury, and watching his opportunity, whilst I endeavoured to rescue one of my friends, whom they were beating in a terrible manner ; he came behind, and gave me such a blow on my right temple, that I staggered like a drunken man. My hat fell off, and my senses were greatly confused ; so that I must have fallen, had he followed his blow. This, doubtless, he would have done ; but in that moment, a young girl, who had lately been awakened and joined our society, thinking I was hurt, instantly took up a stone, about two pounds weight, and threw it at his back. He then left me to revenge himself upon her ; and snatching up the same stone, threw it with such violence in her face, that she fell to the ground and lay motionless. She was supposed to be dead, and was carried home to her mother's house. However, it pleased God that she recovered ; yet she was cut in a most dreadful manner, having her cheek laid open to the bone ; and she will bear this mark of suffering for her Lord's sake, to her dying hour. Others of our friends were considerably hurt. One, in particular, had his face almost covered with blood ; and his coat, waistcoat, and shirt torn half way down his back. However, it is probable we might have come off worse, had not God taken our part ; for, *as the stars in their courses fought against SISERA*, so, the Lord struck our enemies with terror, by sending, in that moment, dreadful flashes of lightning from a cloud, which seemed ready to burst over their guilty heads. Finding an opportunity, while they appeared panic-struck,

we made our escape ; but we were obliged to retreat gradually, as some of our people were old and infirm, and we were not willing to leave them in the rear, lest they should become a prey to their enemies. The next day we found means to bring some of the ringleaders to justice, and they disturbed us no more.

I spent almost two years with these my first children in the gospel ; but, although I loved them as my own soul, I was not easy in my mind to be shut up in one place, and that a small one. I therefore set out on foot upon a journey of about one hundred miles, preaching wherever I found an open door. In this journey I met with some difficulties ; nevertheless, my encouragements more than counterbalanced them. Among several others, one thing was as pleasing as remarkable. An old man came to hear preaching at Wingate, a small village near Sunderland ; and was deeply convinced of sin. He went home with trembling and terror, and could not sleep till he had found a clear sense of pardon. Being filled with joy unspeakable, he communicated it to his wife, with whom he had lived upwards of fifty years. She was exceedingly affected with the relation of what God had wrought in him ; and wished to go the next evening, and hear for herself. She did so ; and being deeply convinced of sin, she asked her husband, if he thought God would give *her* the same blessing, which *he* had obtained. The old man, full of faith, cried, "*O yes ! All things are ready. You may have it this night :—He hath saved me, and I am the greater sinner.*" Being encouraged at this, they agreed to pray together alternately, *confident* that God would bless her that night. They continued wrestling, *Jacob-like*, till the break of day, but no answer ! Their strength was much exhausted, being both upwards of fourscore years of age, and consequently, very infirm ; yet they would not give up ; and the Lord soon after condescended to grant their request, and *spoke her sins forgiven*. What a fulfilment of that promise !—*If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them.* And what encouragement for poor sinners of every age, that these two, even at the eleventh hour, were not rejected by the Lord of the harvest.

Taking this journey in the depth of winter, the weather severe, and some of my lodgings not very comfortable, laid the foundation of a long and dangerous illness, the relicks of which settled in my left hand, which gathered and broke in several places. The whole habit of my body was brought

so low, that I was thought by most who saw me, to be in a deep consumption : indeed, I fully expected I should not recover, and was greatly rejoiced at the prospect of being so soon with him whom my soul loved. Nevertheless, for his sake I felt willing to live, if thereby I might bring glory to his name. I continued in this weak state of body for upwards of two years. Yet I laboured as much as my health would permit, and chiefly on the Hull Circuit.

In the year 1772, Mr. Rankin was appointed for York ; but afterwards, going to America, Mr. Wesley wrote to me to take his place, which I did : and I continued on that Circuit until my strength was so exhausted, that I could travel no longer. I was then advised by Mr. Bruce, a medical gentleman in York, to use the cold bath. And in preference to all others, he recommended *Elkley Wells*, a place near Otley, in the West-Riding of Yorkshire. Before I had been there a week, I felt the good effects : and I am fully persuaded, under God, that water was the means of saving my life. After using it constantly for about three months, in October 1773, I went to Thirsk ; and, at the request of many kind friends, spent my winter there ; where I employed the little strength God had graciously restored to me, and I trust, not without some fruit of my labour.

In May 1774, although I had no relapse of my disorder, it was thought advisable I should return to Elkley for a while to confirm my cure. I did so, and continued in that neighbourhood till August. I now thought myself able to take a circuit, and was appointed, at the Bristol Conference, to labour with Mr. D. Wright, at Thirsk. I was truly thankful for such a fellow-labourer, who acted the part of a father to me. We had the hearts of the people ; and the Lord added many seals to our ministry.

In the year 1775, I was received into full connection, and appointed at the Leeds Conference for Edinburgh ; where I had for my colleagues T. R. and R. W. two faithful men, whose hearts were in the work. The people solicited our stay another year : Mr. Rutherford and I were permitted to remain, and Mr. Mc Nab was appointed with us. — But, although we laboured in love and harmony both with each other, and among the people, yet very little fruit appeared at the end of two years. When we went there, we found two hundred and sixty members : we joined upwards of two hundred more ; and yet, in the end, left only two hundred and forty-five ; — fifteen less than we found, so fluctuating was that people ! Nevertheless, we have a

few steady, faithful, hospitable, and very pious friends in Scotland. I found my heart much united to them, and should probably have stayed longer in that kingdom, had my health permitted.

What injured my constitution a second time, and *again* nearly cost me my life, was a journey to the Isle of Bute. This island is eighteen miles long, and in most parts three or four broad; situate about forty miles north of Glasgow: its inhabitants in general speak the Erse language: few understand English. Being invited by one of the natives, a well-wisher to religion, I was resolved to give them a trial. We had about twenty miles to go by water; and in the second voyage I made, just after we set sail, a dreadful storm arose. The boatmen were so fool-hardy as not to put back again; and the wind being nearly right a-head of our vessel, they were obliged to tack most of the way. The women passengers and children began to shriek and cry dreadfully, so that the sailors were obliged to put them all below, and fasten down the hatches. The place was small, and the people were so numerous, that I expected they would be suffocated! The rest drank so much whisky, that I feared there would not be men enough sober to work the vessel. They pressed me to partake with them; but I could not taste.—No: I had other work! looking every moment when the vessel would fill and overset, as part of it was an open boat. The rain and hail was very heavy from the clouds; and the sea also breaking over us, I had nothing left dry about me. Thus I sat, or stood, without any shelter, for fourteen hours; the water running over the tops of my shoes all the while. But, contrary to our fears, it pleased God, at last to bring us *safe to the haven where we would be*. Having no cloaths to shift me, I went straight to the inn where I had slept before; intending to go immediately to bed, as my only resource to prevent a fit of sickness; but, to my great disappointment, a gentleman's family, who had been detained by the same storm, had possession of my lodgings. In about two hours, an old man, hearing of my situation, came and gave me a kind invitation to his little cottage. I gladly accepted his offer: but my bed being raised only about twelve inches from a very damp earthen floor, and having no fire, it was not quite so comfortable as my condition then required; especially as the coverings were but few; so that I was obliged to help out with my wet clothes. The consequence was, in a few hours I found my throat exceedingly inflamed, and a burning fever through

my whole frame; so that I had little hope of ever seeing the main land again; and it was also impracticable to send for any of my friends, because of the weather. Yet, blessed be God, I was not friendless; for that Friend that sticketh closer than a brother, did not leave me, neither forsake me. He who filleth immensity, can never be absent from those who hope in his mercy; nor will he fail to deliver them in the time of need. Such was his goodness to me, that without *any* human assistance, use of medicine, or comforting cordial, save that of the love of Christ, in a few days I was able to go out again. But I was then at a loss for food, and having nothing I could relish, I employed a poor woman to gather me a kind of shell-fish, about half the size of cockles, which was my chief support, till I was able to return to the main land. After this I remained some months in Glasgow and Edinburgh; but did not recover my health for a long time.

In the year 1777, I was appointed to labour in the East of Cornwall. A journey of between four and five hundred miles, was no small fatigue in my then weak state of body: but the Lord was with me;—I took my appointment as from God, and therefore set out in his name, and found sweet communion with him in the way.

I had long desired to see that most eminently pious man of God, Mr. *Fletcher*; and now an opportunity offered. Stopping at Bristol a few days, to rest myself and horse, I heard of his being at Mr. *Ireland's*, about three miles off, in a poor state of health; and, with two of my brethren, took a ride to see him. When we came there, he was returning from a ride, which he was advised by his physician to take every day. Dismounting from his horse, he came towards us with arms spread open, and eyes lifted up to heaven. His apostolic appearance, with the whole of his deportment, greatly affected me. The first words he spoke, while yet standing in the stable by his horse, were a part of the sixteenth chapter of *St. John*. He pointed out from thence the descent of the Holy Ghost, as the great promise of the Father, and the privilege of all New Testament believers, in a manner I had never heard before: my soul was dissolved into tenderness, and became even as melting wax before the fire.

As an invidious report had been spread, that he had recanted what he had lately written against Calvinism, in those excellent writings of his, entitled his “Checks, &c.” I took the liberty to mention the report, and asked him what

he thought had given rise to it? He replied, he could not tell; except that he had refrained from speaking on controverted points since he came to Mr. Ireland's: partly, by reason of the poor state of his health; and partly, because he did not wish to grieve his kind friend, by making his house a field of controversy: but assured us, he had never yet seen cause to repent of what he had written in defence of the Rev. Mr. Wesley's Minutes. And, though he believed his close application to study had been the means of reducing his body to the state in which we then saw it, yet, he said, if he fell a victim, it was in a good cause.

After a little farther conversation upon his darling topic, the *universal love of God in Christ Jesus*, we were about to take our leave, when Mr. Ireland lent his footman into the yard with a bottle of red wine, and some slices of bread upon a waiter: we all uncovered our heads, while Mr. Fletcher craved a blessing upon the same; which he had no sooner done, but he handed, first the bread to each; and lifting up his eyes to heaven, pronounced those words, *The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life*. Afterwards, handing the wine, he repeated in like manner, *The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.* But such a sacrament I never had before!—A sense of the Divine Presence rested upon us all; and we were melted into floods of tears. His worthy friend Mr. Ireland, grieved to see him exhaust his little strength by so much speaking, took him by the arm, and almost forced him into the house; while he kept looking wishfully, and speaking to us, as long as we could see him: we then mounted our horses and rode away. That very hour more than repayed me for my whole journey from Edinburgh to Cornwall. When I came to Plymouth-Dock, I found a lively and loving society. My heart clave to them. My fellow-labourers and I had a very agreeable year together upon that Circuit, and some good was done, and my health much restored.

In 1778, I was appointed to labour in Kent. It was the first year of the grand encampment on Cox-Heath; which consisted of about fifteen thousand men. Being only half a mile from the Heath, for two or three weeks before I entered upon my circuit, I generally preached in the camp once a day. And I have reason to believe, some of the seed then sown was not lost, having since met with persons both in England and Ireland, who testified they had cause to thank God for the few opportunities they then enjoyed.

How often is that word fulfilled, *Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days.*

In the year 1779, I was appointed to labour at Leeds, where I found a people ripe for the doctrine of holiness; and many that year believed unto full salvation. This was the richest soil for Methodism I had yet known. We found two thousand two hundred members in society, and about twenty local Preachers, who greatly assisted us in the work; and the word of the Lord ran and was glorified; to which the harmony that subsisted between the Preachers, Stewards, Leaders, and people, greatly contributed. But what to me was best of all, I felt my own soul much alive to God, and he sweetly assisted me in all my labours.

In the year 1780, I went to Sheffield, where I found a large society, but less united than those I had left; and therefore I was not so comfortable for a time as I could wish. It grieved me also, that one of my fellow-labourers did not lovingly draw in the same yoke, and soon after left the connection. The uneasiness occasioned in the Society thereby, threatened us with disagreeable consequences; and our enemies expected a considerable division among us: but *he that sitteth above the water-floods*, found means to prevent it; so that instead of losing in our number, we found, at the end of the year, an increase of ninety-seven members. In the latter end of June, Mr. Wesley, according to his usual tour, came to Sheffield, where Mr. Bradford, who then travelled with him, was taken very ill, and obliged to desist. I took his place for six weeks; but I soon found my constitution inadequate to the task. Being much fatigued with riding in the heat, which was very intense at that time, I was seized with a bilious complaint the first day the Conference began at Leeds. Doctor Hamilton, with other physicians, paid every attention to my case, which appeared very doubtful for some days. The chief means whereby I found relief, were bleeding and the warm bath; but it was some time before I was pronounced out of danger. I here learnt some useful lessons while under my Father's rod.—He gave me peace and resignation when my pain was most extreme; and during my whole confinement, I do not know I had one murmuring thought. After my recovery, I felt a degree of gratitude I had not known before; and a resolution fixed in my heart, to be more devoted to God, and more zealous for the good of souls than ever.—I was appointed to labour another year in Sheffield, and was highly favoured with the assistance of two good young men. We laboured together

in harmony, had peace in all our borders, and the work of God greatly prospered. Many souls were awakened and born of God, and one hundred and forty were added to the society.

In 1782, I was appointed for Macclesfield. As the Circuit was large and unwieldy, four Preachers were sent, with instructions to divide it. We did this in the best manner we could, and my worthy colleague, Mr. *Myles*, took charge of the Burslem division. But this, with some other amendments, such as furnishing the Preacher's dwelling-house by subscription, changing the Stewards, &c. gave *deep offence* to a few individuals: but the hearts of the people were united to their Preachers; and notwithstanding all the difficulties we met with, we were greatly comforted among them; and at the end of two years, I had the satisfaction of leaving them considerably increased in number; and, I trust, upon the whole, not less alive to God than I found them.

But all the trials I had ever known were small when compared with that I was here called to bear.—After a lingering illness of about two months, the Lord saw it right to tear from my bleeding heart the dear partner of my cares and sorrows—my ever faithful and affectionate wife. As it so nearly concerns myself, and will, I believe, be a blessing to others, I shall make no apology for inserting a brief narrative of her sweet experience and triumphant exit!

AN
ACCOUNT
 OF
 Mrs. MARTHA ROGERS.

My first beloved wife was born Feb. 14, 1755. She was third daughter of Mr. *Benjamin Knowlden*, Linen and Woollen-Draper, in Loose, a pleasant village, near Maidstone in Kent. Both her parents were Dissenters of the Baptist persuasion, and much noted for their singular piety, as were their parents before them. Her mother died many years ago; and her father in the year 1777; both in full assurance of a glorious resurrection. They had many children; the greater part yet living. Of those who are called

away, there is ground to hope they are in *Abraham's bosom*. My dear wife would often thank God for the piety of her parents, and the christian education and example with which she was blest in her youth; and believed her conversion was in answer to their prayers. She had serious impressions from a child, and was early led to see into the plan of salvation by faith. When about six or eight years of age, her convictions were such as frequently made her leave her little companions, and retire into private corners to pray, while they were taking their recreations.—Yea, her love to God and secret prayer, appeared out of the common way! As she grew to riper years, she had at sundry times gracious visits from the Lord; but from a deep sense of her unworthiness, and a natural diffidence, she was long withheld from professing a sense of pardoning love; although at times she was entirely happy in God; while her *temper, words, and works*, declared the deep piety of her heart.

My acquaintance with her began at Edinburgh, in 1775, and I bless God for the day I first saw her. After a wonderful chain of providences, we were married by Mr. *Wesley*, at Shoreham in Kent, Dec. 4, 1778. Some time after our marriage, the Lord fully convinced her of the necessity of a *pure heart*. She saw clearly the blessing must be received by simple faith, or not at all. Her convictions of inbred sin were deeper than she had ever felt before her justification; although, at the same time, she had no doubt of being a child of God. On returning one evening from our chapel in Leeds, she was much distressed, and several of our kind friends came into our little dwelling, till it was nearly full. Three or four went to prayer, and the power of God was present to bless many. But still she felt herself as if bound in chains, and wept bitterly. As soon as the company were gone, I endeavoured to comfort her; assuring her that the Lord was with her. I also exhorted her to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ;—to cast herself, just as she was, into his arms, who was standing ready to embrace her. On this, she begged me to go up stairs with her: I did so; and falling on our knees, the Lord gave me power to wrestle mightily in prayer on her behalf. Presently all her chains fell off, and she declared, in an extacy of joy, that her soul was set at PERFECT LIBERTY. The Lord applied those words to her heart, *Thou art fair, my love, thou art fair; there is no spot in thee*. She believed, and praised God aloud, saying to me, “Now I am sure, my dear, he hath

heard your prayer for me! I know he hath purified my heart! *My beloved is mine, and I am his.*" But her evidence did not remain long thus clear: nevertheless, from that time to the day of her death, I believe, no one who knew her, had the least cause to doubt of the reality of the work.

Her amiable disposition and christian deportment were truly worthy of imitation. When at any time things of a trying nature had happened among the people, while others would have been repeating grievances, *her* method was, to retire to secret prayer; where she generally left her burden with the Lord. She was of few words:—*no tattler, no busy-body, but a keeper at home.* She most sacredly refrained from speaking evil of any one; but when any used her unkindly, she would bear it in silence, and recommend them to God. As to her *domestic* character; she was a pattern of neatness in her person and apparel; which, with the cleanliness, industry, and frugality, observed in *all* her household affairs, as also her uncommon attention and propriety as a *wife* and a *mother*, did real honour to her sex.

The disorder of which my beloved companion died, was a consumption. At first I was quite ignorant of her danger; and after I began to suspect it, I was a long time unwilling to think, for a moment, of being thus early deprived of so valuable a jewel.—On the first day of the new year, after renewing our covenant with God, it was deeply impressed upon my mind, that *this sickness would be unto death.* My fears were all alarmed: I retired to my room, and poured out my distress before the Lord, but could get no faith for her recovery. I went to her, (then gone to bed) and could no longer refrain from tears. God alone knows what I felt in that moment!—She endeavoured to comfort me; and said, "My dear, do not be distressed.—Is it grief or joy that makes you weep? Have you had a good time at the covenant?" After a little, I replied, My dear, it *has* been a very good time: I am blest:—but you must bear with me: I cannot help fearing the worst.—Your life, my dear, is *surely* in danger! She answered, with her usual sweetness, "Perhaps not:—You can remember the time when I was reduced much lower than I am now, and yet the Lord restored me. He bringeth down to the grave, and raiseth up again. The Lord can do great things: nay, he *hath* done great things!—Fear not, my dear, and all shall be well."

What follows was written by Miss Roe, her beloved friend, and afterwards my second wife.

"Jan. 2, Mrs. Rogers appeared so altered for the worse, that I plainly foresaw her approaching dissolution. I believe she perceived a starting tear; for she said, 'My dear Miss Roe, pray tell me what you think of my state; and if you believe I shall recover: or, if the Lord should call me away, whether you think it will be soon. I wish to know all the danger I am in; for I believe I can resign myself to the Lord, if he pleases to take me: and though I cannot speak on this subject to Mr. Rogers, because he is so deeply affected, yet I wish you to deal plainly. The reason of my asking you is, Mr. R. came to my bed-side last night, and seemed overwhelmed with grief, thinking me in imminent danger. If the Lord had not wonderfully supported me, I could not have borne to see his tears: but surely I shall ever be thankful for the calmness and sweet peace I felt, so that I was enabled to become *his* comforter. But I have since thought a good deal about the nature of my illness, and though I dare not tell *him* so, I think there is little hope of my recovery. Do, my dear, tell me all your mind.'

I then answered; You have no cause to fear death, my love:—*For you to live is Christ, and to die will be eternal gain*; and therefore I will do as you desire. I must acknowledge I have had many fears a long time; and have now little hope of your recovery: yet all things are possible with God!—Though you were at the point of death, he could easily raise you up again;—but I think you will arrive at home before long. 'Well, my dear,' said she, 'I thought you believed so: I could see it in your looks, and I thank you for telling me. It does not hurt me. I believe the Lord will save me; though Satan, at times, would distress me, by suggesting that my evidence was never so clear as some.—But tell me, my dear, do you think persons can feel they love God, if he did not love them?' I said, the Lord shall answer for himself:—*Love is of God; and every one that LOVETH is born of God*: and again, *We love him, because he first loved us*. Reason and experience too, teach us that love shed abroad in our hearts, must be the work of the holy Spirit. It cannot be attained by any power of our own:—Satan cannot give it! nor can it be derived from any but *God himself*; who is the Spring, the Fountain, the Ocean of Love: and the love you feel is the very nature of God, and you will be with him to all eternity. 'Well,' said she, 'my love, what you say has done me good: I believe it is so. I do not love any thing so much as God.

With respect to the *world*, it is nothing to me.—Mr. R. and the dear children, lie nearest my heart of any thing here : but if the Lord should call me away, he will take care of them :—I know he will ! Yet it seems hard to nature, to be parted from Mr. R. after living so happy in each other. (Here I perceived a starting tear ; but she checked it, and continued.) But I should be thankful that it has *been* so, and that we have always been a blessing to each other : and I thank the Lord that I ever knew him.’

The same day, she said, ‘ My dear Miss Roe, will you do me one favour ? Contrive that the nurse may bring my little *Jemmy* to see me : it may be the last time I shall see him in this world ; but do not let Mr. R. know that I say so.’ She then recommended Mr. R. and the dear children to my friendship, especially little *Jemmy* ; and spoke freely of all she wished to be done when she was gone : and then added, ‘ Now my mind will be easy and satisfied. I wish to have done with all thoughts about temporal things, and spend my last moments more profitably. I leave it to you, when you think Mr. R. can bear it, to tell him what I have said. My soul is now truly happy. I believe I shall be for ever with the Lord ! I hope, while I am spared, you will be with me as much as possible. My dear husband, I know will ; and that is all I wish for.’ After this, she often spoke freely, and with sweet composure, of her approaching dissolution ; expressing strong confidence in the Lord, and an humble resignation to his will.

Another time, as I stood by her, she said, ‘ My dear, do you think there is any thing in heaven like beautiful gardens, green fields, or sweet flowers ?’ I answered, We cannot judge with certainty about this ; but we know, whatever will yield delight, or any way contribute to the happiness either of our souls or bodies, we shall surely enjoy. It may be a question whether we shall have the sense of smelling, tasting, &c. but if we have, or whatever appetites or desires we are capable of, we are sure they will all be satisfied. She said, ‘ I have such views of this kind, as I never had before. I see sweet flowery prospects before me, quite delightful ; and in the night, I heard distinctly various sounds of delightful music, quite ravishing !’ I said, I have often heard of God’s dear children, who died rejoicing, having such prospects, and hearing the like. But it is enough that we know we shall enjoy God to all eternity, and that all our desires shall be satisfied in him. ‘ Yes, my dear,’ said she, ‘ this is all, and I shall soon see him, and *know, even as I am known !*’

When Mr. *Rogers* asked her, 'Is your mind composed and resigned?' she said, 'Yes: I am *sure* all is well:—the Lord knows best what to do.—I go but a little before you!' He said, 'O my dear, if it were consistent with the will of God, and the good of the dear children, how should I wish to go with you!'—'Nay, nay, my dear,' said she, 'that would not be right! Your *work* is not done:—The Lord will spare you, and make you more useful than you have ever been.' He asked, 'Can you believe that I shall meet you in glory?' She said, 'Yes; I have *no* doubt of *your* coming there:—if I doubted of either, it would be of myself; but I *cannot* doubt.—We *shall* meet above to part no more!' Mr. R. having written to London for her sister; he asked, 'If your sister should not come to see you, can you be resigned?' 'Yes, my dear,' said she, 'quite resigned. I wished her to come, that she might see I have been situated comfortably and happily; and I thought it might be a comfort to *you* to have her here; but I am entirely satisfied: The will of the Lord is best.'

On Sat. 3, she was very ill, and at night took an emetic, which, though very gentle, almost overpowered her. But a more patient sufferer my eyes never beheld! no; nor one so thankful for every little assistance given her. Sunday 4, little *Jemmy* was brought, according to her desire; and an affecting scene followed!—The apparent struggles between the fondness of a tender mother, when taking her leave of a sick and darling infant; and the humble submission and determined resignation of the dying saint to the will of God!—O how did she forcibly restrain the trickling tear! and would not suffer her feelings to prevail over that noble fortitude with which the Lord wonderfully endued her spirit! It proved, as she had said, the *last time* she saw him: for, just a fortnight after, the dear little purchase of redeeming blood fled to *Abraham's* bosom! I now saw her disorder making swift advances. She begged I would stay with her all that night: I did so, and afterwards left her as little as possible, till Jesus called her to his arms."—Thus far her friend: what follows was written by myself.

Jan. 7, I found by a conversation with her doctor, that all hopes of life were at an end! and, seeing me deeply affected, she imagined the cause; and, with a most heavenly smile, endeavoured to comfort me. After many other words of a similar nature, she said, "What pleasure should it afford us, my dear, that we can look back on more than

five years that we have lived together, and can say, we have been helps, and not hindrances to each other in the ways of God. And what cause have you, as well as me, to be happy in the reflection, that we *never had ONE jarring string* since we first knew each other: and notwithstanding we have had many trials from others, yet to each other we have never been the least cause of sorrow. And if the Lord should take me now, you will follow me; but not yet:—No, my dear, you have more to *do* and *suffer*; but he who hath hitherto supported, will still be your helper. You will live to be more happy and more useful than ever! You shall, my dear, I know you shall. The Lord knows you are upright before him, therefore you have nothing to fear: He will lay underneath, and round you, his everlasting arms:—Go on, and let nothing discourage you. I believe the Lord will prosper all you take in hand, and that he will bless the children also, and make them *his* children. You may be discouraged to think how you shall do with them when I am gone; but you need not:—The Lord will raise you up friends where you do not expect, and you shall want for nothing: and what is best of all, I shall meet you in glory!” I replied, That is a pleasing thought! She answered, “It is.”

In the evening, she desired the children, *Joseph* and *Benjamin*, might be brought to her bed-side. She kissed them both, and prayed that the blessing of *Jacob's* God might ever attend them: and then added, “I believe God *will* bless you, and *make* you a blessing: I believe he will make you *good men*, and you will one day follow me to heaven.”

Jan. 14. Great part of the morning, my dear companion was hardly able to speak; but her mind seemed quite composed, and a heavenly sweetness appeared in her countenance. I prayed with her, and afterwards, being seated by the side of her bed, she burst suddenly into tears. On being asked the cause, she replied, “O! 'tis happiness that makes me weep!—I am thinking of Jesus, and how his name charms all the heavenly host! O! he is a precious Saviour! (Here she wept again with overflowing joy, and continued :) I have many relations in heaven, who were near and dear to me;—a FATHER, a MOTHER, and SISTERS, and BROTHERS, and others whom I loved tenderly; but they are all *nothing*, when I think of JESUS! whom I shall soon see, and praise him better than I can now. Angels will be blessed companions above: but O! they are nothing!

I can only think of JESUS!—My sweet Saviour! I do love thee! Where is that hymn that speaks of JESUS as the subject of all the angelic songs?" The hymn was read, though with many tears; part of which is as follows:—

"Burst ye emerald gates! and bring To my raptur'd vision,
All the extatic joys that spring Round the bright Elysian:
Lo! we lift our longing eyes! Break ye intervening skies;
Son of Righteousness arise; Ope the gates of paradise.
Floods of everlasting light Freely flash before him:
Myriads with supreme delight Instantly adore him!
Angel-trumps resound his fame; Lutes of shining gold proclaim
All the music of his name, Through eternity the same.

I shall never forget her looks at that moment!—She was more like an inhabitant of heaven just descended, than any thing else! Such was her extacy of joy and praise—her sparkling eyes, and outspread arms, that it appeared as if body and soul were just then taking flight to her immortal home. Seeing her so amazingly supported, I said, My dear, the Lord is gracious to you indeed! Though your greatest temptation, during your whole life, was to doubt your acceptance; I have observed, since your late conversation with Miss *Roe*, you have been constantly happy; inasmuch, that the enemy is not even permitted to *shew* himself. She answered, "No, my dear, I am sure I have *done* with him: He has no more power over me: I will have no more to say to him." I said, My dear, he is a bold adversary; he ventured to attack even Christ himself, though he could say, *he hath nothing in me*. I mention this, that you may not be surprized if he should assault you, as he hath done many of God's dear children, even in their latest moments. She said, "I know, my dear, you do it for my good; but I am quite sure he shall torment me *no more*! He *would*, but my dear Saviour will not *let* him. The Lord sees my extreme weakness, and he loves me *too* well to lay *any* more upon me. My precious Saviour is all I want:—He knows I love him:—Yes, my JESUS is my ALL; and I believe he *will* be so: He will *never, never, never* leave me!" And so it was; for I do not remember she had one gloomy moment after, though she lived a month.

One day, while several friends were standing round her bed, she broke out in praise to God, saying, "How many mercies hath the Lord bestowed upon me, of which I am unworthy!" She then turned her face to Mr. *Whitaker*, and said, "O, Sir, what cause have I, above all creatures, to be thankful! especially in this time of need! How

indulgent is the Lord in sending me such a kind friend as dear Miss Roe. I am far from my own relations ; but I have in *her* all I want. She does *indeed* act the part, not only of a loving sister, but of a tender, indulgent mother ! I pray the Lord to reward her !—I cannot ; but I believe he will. Nay, he *does* reward her, and I believe he will bless her more than ever. And I thank you, sir, for all your regard and friendship to me and mine. You have been a faithful and steady friend. But you know your reward is with the Lord. The Lord *does* bless you, and he *will* bless you more and more ; I know he will. You have gone through many trials, and you will have more to pass through : you know *the way to the kingdom lies through much tribulation*. But be not afraid :—Trust in the Lord, and he will support you. Yes, yes ; he will bring you through all. I believe I shall meet you in heaven !”

The day after, being very comfortable, she looked at me with a smile, and said, “ Do, my dear, tell me something about my JESUS. O, he is a precious Saviour ! I love him indeed !—But I am very weak ! do *you* speak, my dear, and tell me some of his sayings.” I then repeated the following passages, with some others of a similar kind : *In my Father's house are many mansions. He that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life. And they shall see HIS FACE : and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more DEATH, neither sorrow nor crying ; neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.* ALL these, said I, my dear, are yours ! She answered, “ Yes, I believe they are ; JESUS is mine ! That is a sweet word, which is just come to my mind, *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints*. These words were never so sweet to me before.” At my request, her funeral Sermon was afterwards preached from them.

In the evening, Mr. Simpson called to see her, and his conversation and prayer, was made a blessing to her ; and I believe she was made as great a blessing to him. I asked her, if the Lord should then take her, whether she chose that Mr. S. should preach a funeral Sermon for her in the New Church ? She replied, “ Yes, if it will not make me appear of too great consequence :—I am afraid of being thought more than I am. I would not have much said of me. I feel I am a poor unworthy creature. I truly respect Mr. S. and if it might be of any use to the *living*, let it be so.

Jan. 18, she had a violent fit of coughing, and nature seemed in agonies. I said to her, My dear, this is *hard* work! Turning her languid face to me, she answered, with a heavenly smile, "No, my dear, it is not *hard*;—JESUS makes it *sweet*: He suffered much more for me! I should be ungrateful if I thought it *hard*, or if I had a murmuring thought. I am sensible it is the Lord's goodness to me, and I am thankful for it. My mind is composed, and I am sure all will be well."

Jan. 19. This was a happy day to her. While I stood by the bed-side, she looked at me, and said, "The Lord blefs *you*, my dear!—He *will* blefs you. What cause have I to be thankful for the day I first knew you! I *might* have been cast into the way of a gay world; but the Lord made *you* the instrument of preserving me from it. I hope I shall be one diamond more in your crown, and shall praise God to all eternity for you!—Go on, my dear, and the Lord *will* be with you." Then, speaking of Mr. Wesley, she desired her sincere love and thanks to him for all the care and tenderness of a father which he had *ever* shewn her: she earnestly prayed the Lord to reward him for it all: adding, she believed God would blefs him in his latter days; and that he would make a triumphant end; and in a short time she should meet him again in her Father's house.

Jan. 23, George Pearson (a pious man, and one of the oldest Methodists in Macclesfield) called to enquire after her, and by her desire, was asked up stairs. She gave him her hand, and said, "Well, well, George, I am glad to see you; I *love* the Lord's children, and I believe you are one. You have known the ways of God a long time. The Lord hath done much for you: yes, he *hath* blessed you, and he *will* blefs you still. He is a good and faithful God. I have ever proved him so, and especially in this time of need. He doth greatly blefs and comfort me, and he will save me to the end. I believe you have had many trials, since you first set out in the ways of God.—You now grow near the end of your journey:—You will not forsake the Lord now, and I am sure he will *not* forsake *you*. No, no; the Lord never forsakes his people. You see he does not forsake me, unworthy as I am.

The next day she was much composed, and given to slumber. She had no pain, except when her cough came on. She looked at me wishfully some time, and then said, "Pray with me; and ask the Lord, if it be his pleasure, to take me:—I long to be gone!" I replied, My dear, I cannot

do that ; I wish you to stay longer. She answered, " Why, my dear, cannot you give me up ?—*You must, you must be resigned*, my dear !—It is the Lord's doing, and you know you have often said, whatever *he* does is *well* done !"

Some time after this, she called the maid to her, and said, " *Phæbe*, be sure you be a good girl. Serve the Lord. Give him your heart. Religion is the best thing, *Phæbe* : Nothing else will do. Be truly religious, and then you will be fit to live, or fit to die ! O, it is a blessed thing to be devoted to God in our youth ! Do not forget what I say : I am dying ! you may live many years, and you may follow me soon : we cannot tell.—The Lord knoweth. O, think on these things, and you will see me again in heaven !"

Miss *Roe* having assisted her in what she wanted, she looked at her, and said, with a peculiar emphasis, " God bless you, my dear, and reward you for all your kindness to me !—He will reward you ; I believe he will." Miss *R.* answered, " To be of the least service to you, is to me a sufficient reward. I can truly say, I am blessed in being with you. I can only wish to be *like* you, when I come into like circumstances." She answered, " O, my dear, you will make a *glorious* end, whenever you go !—But I hope the Lord will spare you many years. Your work is not done ! You will do much more *good* before you follow me."

Jan. 26, being asked how she felt herself, she replied, " Very comfortable. I feel the Lord is good to me ; and notwithstanding all my unworthiness, I believe he will accept me : nay, he *does* accept me ;—I know that Jesus is mine, and I am his ! I am indebted to his merit for all !—I am saved *entirely* through Christ !—I leave all my concerns with him ; and am sure he will keep what I have committed to his care :—My dearest husband ; my sweet children ; my beloved friends ; my every care I leave with Jesus ! I fully believe he will preserve them all, and we shall meet above."

After this, as she perceived her dissolution drawing near, she began to offer up fervent prayer to God to support her in her latest hour, and to give her patience and resignation ; and arm her with the same mind that was in her suffering Lord :—to bless the dear children, and to comfort *me* in the awful moment when she should be called hence ; saying, " I have often thought of this, and always feared, if the Lord should take me from you, you would not be able to bear it. But I now believe he will support you :—*You must* look to him. I shall leave you ; but Jesus will not. No, no :—You have been closely tried since you came to Mac-

clesfield ; but you can say, *Hitherto hath the Lord helped me.* And he is the same to help you still. Trust in him, and fear not. You have lost nothing by suffering in his cause ; but you have gained much :—I am sure the Lord hath rewarded you in your own soul. How true is that word, *All things work together for good to them that love God.*

For several days, being exceeding weak, we could scarcely hear her speak, only by short intervals. On perceiving her whisper, we attended, and her words were, “ O, my precious, precious Lord, thou wilt not tarry long ! I shall soon be with thee ! What a day will that be ! I shall praise thee for ever ! ” At another time, after a terrible fit of coughing, she cried, “ Well ; but I know my reward is with the Lord, and my God will be my help. Glory be to his dear name ! I feel he *doth* help me ! ” She then lay silently breathing prayer and praise ; and often saying, “ Come ! come ! come Lord Jesus !—Do come, blessed Saviour ! Come ! come away !—I long to be with thee !—I shall be with thee very soon ! ”

Feb. 6, after a violent struggle with her cough, she got up some blood. On hearing us mention this, she said, “ Well ; it is all right !—My Deliverer is drawing nearer and nearer. He will not tarry long. O, my gracious Lord, thou wilt come and set me at liberty ! Come, Lord Jesus ! ” She then turned her languid face to Miss Roe, and, with a smile, said, “ My dear, I think my Lord will not be long in coming now. O, he is a sweet Saviour ! ” Miss R. replied, “ I believe he will not tarry long ; but you must remember, every moment you suffer here, is adding to the brightness of your crown in glory.” She said, “ Well, that is a blessed thought ! I thank my Lord for it all. O, what sweetness, what happiness I feel ! I am glad it is just as it is : All is right.”

Feb. 8, conversing with her as she could bear it ; I was saying, how many profitable moments we had spent together :—She replied, “ Well, my love, they will be renewed again.” Seeing me affected, and in tears, she said, “ What is the matter ? My dear, do not grieve :—A MOMENT cannot *always* last !—You and I are sure to meet again on mount Sion. Be of good comfort.”

The day before her death, namely, Feb. 14, she was more cheerful and conversable than a fortnight before. Having long expected her dissolution every hour, we did not inform her of the death of her child ; for we feared the surprise might interrupt her, and perhaps do her harm.

But she now enquired so particularly about him, that we were constrained to tell her the whole. Lifting up her eyes to heaven, with a sweetness inexpressible, she cried, "My dear *Jemmy*!—my precious!—my darling!—Has my sweet babe *indeed* got to heaven before me? Well, though he has a little the start of me, it is not much. I am going quickly. Yes, I shall soon see him again. O, how good is the Lord!"

A little before three o'clock next morning, she had a severe fit of coughing, and tried to get up the phlegm, but in vain. I said, You have had a hard struggle, my dear; but this also is permitted by him who loves you tenderly. Yes, you are dear to God; and he has some wise end to answer in thus lengthening out your affliction. But your Lord is now, in effect, saying, *IT IS ENOUGH!* Faith and patience are now performing their *last work*!—A few minutes more, and you shall be *perfect and entire, lacking nothing*!—You, my dearest creature, are *this* moment suffering all you ever shall suffer to all eternity. You shall never, never, never suffer again. *JESUS* saith, *Behold, I come quickly*:—*Thou shalt sorrow no more, neither shalt thou feel any more pain.* She replied, "These are precious words; and I believe they are all true, and that I shall prove them so. Yes, I shall! I shall! I shall! The Lord bless you!" After this, she lay composed for about a quarter of an hour, silently breathing prayer and praise to God. Then the cough came on again, and a most severe struggle ensued, which threw her into the agonies of death. She was convulsed all over in an instant. A more moving scene never presented itself!—It was nature's last effort!

For a time, while the agony was at its height, we thought she was delirious, and were thankful to think her insensible of her pain. Just as it seized her, she cried, "Pray! pray! pray! O pray for me!" We did so, and felt God was present. The agony abated a little, and her reason returned in a moment. She instantly cried out, with uncommon vehemence, clasping her hands, "My God! my God! my Saviour! my King!" and repeated this many times. I said, Yes, my dearest love, your Saviour is coming to you. He is here! *JESUS* is now standing by, and his holy angels with him. They are all waiting for you!—See! their wings are spread out to bear you away! She cried, with a loud voice, "I know it! I know it *well*!" repeating the same words, at least, ten times over. She was then silent a little; and when my full heart would permit me, I repeated these lines,—

"Hark! they whisper! angels say,
Sister spirit come away!"

and told her, these her favourite verses were now completely fulfilled;—that she was now in effect saying,

"Cease, fond nature, cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life."

I meant to have gone on to the end; but just as I repeated,

"Heaven opens on my eyes!"

she stopt me short, by crying out so loud as to be heard down stairs, and through every room in the house, "See! see! see! what a fine man!—See! see! see! see! what a fine man!" Never was there a more solemn scene!—It was *indeed* affecting to the highest degree! In that dread moment, an awe fell upon us all, as if the LORD JESUS CHRIST was visibly present. From the uncommon vehemence and unshaken confidence with which she had just before used the prayer of her dying Lord, *My God! my God!* we had not a doubt, but as she was then, in some measure, drinking of the same cup which Christ drank in the garden, (for she was bathed all over in a cold sweat,) so, in like manner, was an angel sent, or JESUS himself appeared to strengthen her in her last agony. She continued with her eyes fixed, repeating the same words, "See! see! see! what a fine man!" for, at least, fifteen or twenty minutes without interruption, till her strength was quite exhausted: then, with a lower voice, she cried, "Come! come! come!—Saviour! Saviour! come! come! come!" and gently leaning back, she sweetly sunk into his arms, at half past five o'clock on Sunday morning, Feb. 15:—Having just seen her birth-day, and ended her twenty-ninth year in a world of sorrow, she began with her Lord in paradise, the Sabbath which shall have no end. My youngest son, a lovely child, (as mentioned above) died a few days before, aged eight months; and they were both laid in one grave.

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I was now left with my two little boys, one four, the other only two years old. But the Lord was merciful both to them and me, who, in the course of his providence, raised us up a kind friend in Miss *Roe*, (only daughter of the late Rev. *James Roe*, of Macclesfield,) an intimate acquaintance and twin soul of their dear mother; and whose love to each other (as the preceeding pages shew) exceeded the love of sisters.

As I clearly perceived the Lord had prepared in her another help-mate for me, and one every way calculated to assist me both in my soul and labours, I therefore entered into the marriage state a second time, Aug. 19, 1784; and I believe I shall praise God to all eternity for giving me another companion, who possessed every accomplishment I could wish for in woman. She was a true yoke-fellow indeed; and it pleased the Lord to make her uncommonly useful. She was in some measure prepared for this, not only by a liberal education, but also by an early conversion to God. She was deeply awakened, and brought to the knowledge of Christ, at the age of seventeen; and a short time after, felt the need of a farther work of grace. For this she earnestly intreated the Lord, who soon came to her help.

“He spoke the second time be clean,  
And took away her inbred sin.”

From that time to the day of her death, although variously tempted and tried, in common with others, she held fast her confidence in God: nor did I ever see the least thing in any part of her conduct, inconsistent with her profession. The evenness of her temper, and the cheerfulness of her disposition, as well as her faith and prayers, have greatly contributed to my comfort, when closely exercised and tried from different quarters. She was certainly the special gift of God to me: And I have not the shadow of a doubt, but, after a few more conflicts here, I shall follow *them* who are gone before! There—there we shall most assuredly meet again, and together spend a glorious eternity, in recounting the wonders of PROVIDENCE and of GRACE!

Immediately after our marriage, we hastened to my appointment in Dublin, where we safely arrived, in a Liverpool packet, after an agreeable passage of thirty hours. I had not been many days in that city, before I saw some fruit of my labour, and was fully convinced my going there was of God. A few years ago, there had been a great lifting time in that society; but the troublers of Israel were now removed, and we found the people fully prepared to receive the GOSPEL OF PEACE. Within the space of six weeks, several found mercy, and returned public thanks to Almighty God for a sense of his pardoning love; and many more were deeply awakened. We received this as a token for good, and the hopes of all were encouraged to expect a more glorious out-pouring of the Spirit. For this, a general spirit of supplication was given, and the Lord answered for himself in a wonderful manner.



Oct. 10, at our quarterly love-feast, soon after the people began to speak their experience, a poor woman, under deep conviction, cried aloud for all present to pray for her. We instantly fell upon our knees, and intreated the Lord on her behalf. In that moment the power of God descended in such a manner, that I believe not one unaffected soul remained under the roof. We continued wrestling in prayer for near half an hour, and afterwards found, not less than seven souls were clearly justified; and many who had received notes of admision on that occasion, were deeply awakened, and immediately joined the society. The next evening, another was justified under the word, and two more under the last prayer, when also a poor backslider felt the Lord had healed him. Within the next week following, five others were brought into gospel liberty; and in the month ensuing, thirteen more. At a love-feast held in our Gravel-walk Chapel, Nov. 18, eight persons received a sense of pardon, two backsliders were restored, and a stranger who had got admittance for that time, was truly awakened. About a fortnight after this we had our band love-feast, when two more were justified, and three at the same time professed to be renewed in love. In the beginning of December, one was justified at St. Patrick's Church, when receiving the sacrament. And one who had been educated a Roman Catholic, but was awakened about six weeks before, received a sense of pardon under the word, at our Preaching-house; as did two more, who were convinced of sin at one of the above love-feasts.

On Christmas-day, our chapel at White-Friars was well filled at four o'clock in the morning. We continued in preaching, exhortation, and prayer, till eight. It was a memorable season, and the power of God was manifest in the whole congregation, which consisted of about fifteen hundred people. I cannot ascertain the number of souls that were converted to God, but several found a clear sense of his pardoning love shed abroad in their hearts; and many others were awakened, who had remained, until that time, entire strangers both to God and his people.

The first Sunday in the new year, all the society, with several other friends, assembled together to renew their covenant with God. It was a most solemn season. I seldom remember to have felt more of the divine presence at any time. The language of my heart, and I believe, of most present, was, *How awful is this place!—Surely it is the*

*house of God, this is the gate of heaven!* So it was found, for three penitents and two backsliders, were, at that blessed ordinance, reconciled to God by faith in the blood of Christ. And on the Thursday and Friday evenings following, while the form of the covenant was farther explained, four more received forgiveness of sins; and two others, under preaching the ensuing Sabbath. From that time to the 25th of March, thirty-six more received a sense of pardoning mercy.

On Good-Friday, two more were justified under the word, and one at the communion in *St. Patrick's*. On Easter-day, many could witness, *Christ is risen indeed*. Two received a sense of pardon in the morning, and in the evening four more felt the power of him who *bruised the head of the serpent*, while attending to a sermon from *Gen. iii. 15*. And beside these, three others were blessed with a degree of inward liberty they had not known before. We had reason to hope our honoured Father, *Mr. Wesley*, would have spent his Easter with us, but being detained in England longer than he expected, he did not arrive in Dublin till near a fortnight after, in which time, three more were pardoned, two backsliders restored, and two others experienced, *The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin*. *Mr. Wesley* spent near three weeks in the city; during which time eight persons were justified under his preaching. And before he returned from visiting the country societies, fifteen souls found peace with God. In the time of Conference, two others received a sense of pardon, and three more were enabled to believe to full salvation. The number of souls brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God, in the course of the year past, was a hundred and thirty; and there was an increase in the society of two hundred members, after excluding all those who were judged improper to remain.

When I found my fellow-labourer was to be removed, I made it matter of prayer, that God would send me another suitable in every respect. The Lord fulfilled my desire, and gave me *Christopher Peacock*; a man every way adapted to the work; who was also my own son in the gospel, and for whom I had a tender affection. He was very zealous and laborious; full of faith and the Holy Ghost, and his ministry was attended with abundant success. But it pleased him who seeth not as man seeth, and *whose judgments are a great deep*, early to deprive us of this valuable man of God. A putrid fever was commissioned to snatch him away (perhaps from some evil to come) in the midst of his useful-

ness, and in the full vigour of youth. He finished his course Feb. 15, 1786, in the thirty-fourth year of his age. I drew up a short account of his character and death, which is published in the Arminian Magazine, vol. IX. p. 540. to which account I refer the reader, for farther particulars concerning this excellent man.

The affliction and death of one I loved so much, with what I felt for the people in losing such a helper, so greatly affected my health, that for some weeks I thought I must have sunk. My burden was certainly very great : for, beside the labours of the city, which were quite sufficient for any *two* Preachers, I had the care of all the books, with the different accounts to keep in English and Irish ; no Book-steward being then appointed, as at present. Beside, at that time, the Dublin Assistant had various things from the different circuits to occupy his attention, being a kind of general superintendent ; as District-meetings were then unknown. Application was made to Mr. *Wesley* to fill up the vacancy, but in vain, as all the Preachers were engaged. This was to me an awful period ! and I greatly feared the glorious revival which we were now in the very midst of, would, at least, be impeded. But the death of a Preacher so much beloved, had a good effect upon the people. We cried to the Lord, and he was better to us than all our fears : for, great as my fatigue was, my health grew better ; so did the Lord perfect his strength in human weakness. I was led to consider this was the Lord's work, and that he could carry it on *with*, or *without* means, or by what instruments he chose. The congregations continued very large, and the prayer-meetings and classes exceeding lively ; and scarce a week passed that some were not awakened and joined to the society ; and frequently under the word, three, four, or five, were enabled to praise God for his converting grace. And, although they were amazingly happy in the love of Christ, yet there was scarcely any appearance of what is commonly called *wild-fire*. And what is yet better, the work was not only *gradual*, but *deep*, in most of them who were the subjects of it. The number of persons whom we had reason to believe were savingly brought to the knowledge of God among us, in the course of the second year, was one hundred and seventy-eight souls, which is forty-eight more than in the former year : and the society amounted to more than nine hundred members.



Having had so considerable an increase for so long a time together, it was natural to expect (as is common) the tide would now begin to ebb. But he who is able to do above all we can ask or think, still continued to awaken sinners in great numbers. Zion's cords were lengthened, and her converts flowed in from every quarter. Several concurring circumstances induced Mr. *Wesley* to comply with the *unanimous* request of the society in leaving me amongst them a *third* year. And I was favoured with a fellow-labourer of piety, integrity, and good abilities: nor did the Lord give us less fruit than before. When we came to deliver up our charge at the yearly conference; after thoroughly weeding the classes, and lopping off one hundred and twenty-six members; some for immorality, and others for omitting to meet their class; yet the society had increased to eleven hundred and thirty-six; which made in all, an addition of above six hundred members in *three* years. And from the best accounts we could keep, there was every reason to believe, four hundred and fifty-eight of those were savingly converted to God.

In the year 1787, I was stationed at Cork. But before I could enter upon my new appointment, some temporal matters rendered it necessary that me and my wife should first go to Macclesfield. The journey appeared more pleasing, as we were honoured with the company of Mr. *Wesley*, Dr. *Coke*, and others of our Preachers and their wives, across the channel. But although the passage in general was agreeable, it was attended with unsuspected danger. When we had gone about half-way from Dublin to Park-Gate, the packet (borne down by a rapid tide from the Welsh coast) suddenly struck upon a rock, where we lay beating vehemently for about an hour. The captain ordered all the women and children upon deck, to try if we could save their lives by getting them upon the rock, expecting the ship every moment to go to pieces. But through the kind providence of God, and after fervent prayer to him for deliverance, it pleased the Lord to interpose in our behalf, so that we got clear again, though not without some damage to the vessel. However, the pumps proved sufficient to keep it up till we reached the port.

Having settled our affairs, we hastened back to Dublin, and from thence to Cork, where, after a journey of near seven hundred miles to and fro, by sea and land, we were kindly received by an affectionate people, who were studious to make our lives comfortable. During the preceding

year, some unhappy jarrings had greatly injured the work of God, so that in visiting the classes about three weeks after I arrived I found the society reduced from five hundred to three hundred and ninety-seven members. My fellow-labourer was a pious man, and a good preacher; and we had the happiness to see peace and prosperity return. We added a hundred to the society before new-year's-day; and had reason to believe upwards of sixty of these were converted to God. But the progress of the word did not stop here; the Lord continued to prosper his work to the salvation of many souls in that city: and it is probable more good would have been done, but for a few troublesome spirits, who, under a pretence of standing up for the church, hurt the minds of many. The Lord greatly blessed his word also among the soldiers. Eight sergeants and about forty privates met constantly in class; and some of them became eminent for piety. Notwithstanding every difficulty cast in the way, the society increased to six hundred and sixty; many of whom were much alive to God, and ornaments to their profession at the time we left them.

In the year 1790, I was appointed for London; where I found a numerous, pious, loving people; who had long been accustomed to every branch of the Methodist discipline, and who paid attention to our rules for *conscience sake*. I found an extensive field of action in that great metropolis and its environs, and plenty of work for twice the number of itinerant preachers *then* appointed. We had near forty local preachers to plan; above thirty chapels and preaching places in town and country to supply; and about three thousand people in the different societies to visit. I made a point of seeing all these, at *least*, once every quarter, to deliver tickets and regulate their classes, whether the societies were large or small, in town or country.—When my going to London was first proposed, I felt exceedingly for the importance of such a charge, and should have objected to the appointment, but I was afraid of running counter to the order of God. Mr. *Duncan Wright* and Mr. *John Broadbent* were appointed my fellow-labourers the first year. The former died, and the latter being mostly sick, I had little assistance from either. During my second year, I was much better off in that respect. But the Conference being fully convinced of the utility of the measure, *six* Preachers have ever since been appointed; which makes it *now* much more easy and agreeable.

I bless God, while he gives me strength to go through it, *labour* to me is *delight*. For near seven months, I felt uncommon satisfaction both in my labours and family connections. But it is impossible to describe what I felt on the removal of our venerable Father, Mr. *Wesley*. Yet, I esteem it one of the greatest honours ever done me, that I was providentially called to accompany him in his last journey, and be with him in his latest moments. Upon an event so every way interesting as the death of this GREAT GOOD MAN, it will hardly be deemed a digression to say a little here upon that subject. And I think it the *more* proper so to do, as being a witness to the whole of that most affecting scene.

Saturday, Oct. 2, 1790, Mr. *Wesley* returning to London after his usual summer tour, my late dear wife and I, with six more of our friends, filled two coaches, and set out to meet him. He arrived at Cobham, about twenty miles from London, a little after us, in good health and spirits. We all dined there together, and about six in the evening reached home, where we praised the Lord with joyful hearts.— Sunday 3, he preached in the New Chapel to a crowded audience, with much power, from *Mat. xxii. 37. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart*. Many souls were greatly comforted. Indeed, his preaching during the whole winter was attended with uncommon unction; and he frequently spoke, both in his sermons and exhortations, as if each time were to be his last; and often desired the people to receive what he advanced as his dying charge. His conversation also, to us in his own family, seemed to indicate a presentiment of his death. He frequently spoke of the state of separate spirits, and appeared desirous to know their particular employments. I believe, for the three last months of his life, there were scarce three evenings passed together, but he gave out and sung in the family the following hymn.

“ Shrinking from the cold hand of death,  
I too shall gather up my feet;  
Shall soon resign this fleeting breath,  
And die my father’s God to meet!

Number’d among thy people, I  
Expect with joy thy face to see;  
Because thou didst for sinners die,  
Jesus, in death remember me!

O that without a lingering groan,  
I may the welcome word receive!  
My body with my charge lay down,  
And cease at once to work and live!”



As Mr. *Wesley* generally left London in the beginning of March ; and as for many years he had, with the help of the Assistant Preacher, delivered to the society their quarterly tickets before his departure ; the visitation, of course, began early in February. I perceived his strength swiftly declining, and proposed to go through the classes alone, but he would not relinquish one hair's breadth of his usual labour. We continued, therefore, for near three weeks together, from early in the morning till late at night, until he had spoken to upwards of two thousand people ; which he did in a manner well becoming his last advice to each. Towards the close of this business, nature seemed quite exhausted, as will next appear.

Feb. 17, he preached at Lambeth, from, *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life*. After preaching, upwards of fifty persons met to renew their tickets ; but when we got about half through, he was obliged to submit, and leave me to finish. Most of the day following he read and wrote as usual ; and in the evening I accompanied him to Chelsea, where he preached from, *The king's business requires haste* : but he was obliged to stop three or four times before he had finished. After sermon, he retired into the vestry, till I delivered tickets to near forty people. When I went to him, he was hardly able to get into his chaise ; and on our way home he was very poorly indeed. He continued so until Sunday evening, when he revived considerably, and at his request, two of his own discourses on our Lord's sermon on the mount, were read to him ; and in the evening he came down stairs, and supped with us in the parlour. Monday he rode out to see a friend ; and on the Tuesday evening, preached us an excellent sermon at the City-Road, from, *We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith*.

Wed. 23, he went to Leatherhead, (a village about twenty miles from London,) at the particular request of a gentleman there, who had lately buried his wife, and who, till then, was an entire stranger to Mr. *Wesley*. Mr. *Bradford* being engaged, I accompanied him thither, little suspecting it to be his last journey, but so it proved. In less than two hours after our arrival, our kind host, who was a magistrate, and well beloved in the neighbourhood, sent his servants to invite the inhabitants to hear preaching at his house. A considerable number soon assembled, and were ordered up stairs into a spacious dining-room, set round with

fine mahogany chairs, and covered with a beautiful carpet. The plain country people, who had come plodding through the mire, seemed rather out of their element : however, they all appeared to hear with deep attention, while Mr. *Wesley* gave them a most solemn warning, from *Isa. lv. 6, 7. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found*, &c. which was the last sermon this eminent Messenger of *JEHOVAH* ever delivered. And it was a little extraordinary, that of his almost innumerable acquaintance, there should be none to hear it, except myself and *Richard Summers*, who drove his chaise, all the rest being entire strangers. In the afternoon we drank tea with a clergyman, at whose house we also slept : and the night following we stopped at Mr. *Wolff's*, at *Balaam*, on our return home. At both these places Mr. *Wesley* rested comfortably, and rose each morning at four o'clock, it being his usual hour of rising for more than sixty years. On the Friday morning, after retiring half an hour, he desired me to read to him part of the account just then published, on the sufferings of the poor negroes in the West-Indies ; and before breakfast, to write a letter to a friend in Cork, which was the last he ever dictated ; and it was with the utmost difficulty he signed his name ; nor did this eminent writer ever after that use the pen.

During the two preceeding days, I flattered myself Mr. *Wesley* was recovering entirely from his late indisposition : but, alas ! I now found my mistake.—A sudden change for the worse appeared ; which made me very anxious to get him home ; where we arrived at eleven o'clock Friday forenoon. It was with difficulty he walked up stairs. Being seated in his room, he desired to be left alone for half an hour : which being expired, we took him some mulled wine ; of which he drank a little, but in a few minutes threw it up, and desired to lie down. Having dispatched a messenger for the Physician, he now came, to whom Mr. *Wesley* said, with a smile, " Doctor, they are more afraid than hurt !" But, to our sorrow, the issue proved our fears were too well grounded. He lay in bed most of this and the next day, with a quick pulse and burning fever, exceeding heavy, and much inclined to sleep. On Sunday morning he arose ; and with a little help dressed himself. While sitting in his chair, he looked cheerful, and repeated part of that verse in the scripture hymns : *Forsake me not when my strength faileth.*

" Till glad I lay this body down,  
Thy servant, Lord, attend ;

And O! my life of mercies crown  
With a triumphant end!"

Soon after this, his strength seemed exhausted, and he was obliged to lie down. After composing a little, he said to his niece, Miss *Wesley*, "*Sally*, have you zeal for God now?" On her replying, "I wish to love him better, that I may have more;" he said, "Do you continue to rise early?" After this his fever was very high; but it abated in the evening, and he got up. Sitting a while in deep meditation, he said, "How necessary it is for every one to be on the right foundation:—I THE CHIEF OF SINNERS AM, BUT JESUS DIED FOR ME. We must be justified by faith, and then go on to entire sanctification."

Mon. 28, we were greatly alarmed at his increasing weakness, and would gladly have called in other physicians, but he *absolutely* refused. He could speak but little all the day; yet, that little shewed his whole soul was taken up with the things pertaining to that kingdom to which he was hastening. Once, in a low but distinct manner, he said, "There is no way into the holiest but by the blood of Jesus." He tried to say more, but could not. He was very restless all night, but would not complain; and in the morning began and sung,

"All glory to God in the sky," &c.

At the end of the second verse, his strength failed. After laying still awhile, he called for a pen and ink, which were instantly brought: We laid paper also before him, and put the pen into his hand, but he said, "I *cannot* write." Being asked what he would wish to say, "Nothing," said he, "but that **GOD IS WITH US.**" In the evening, he desired to get up. While his clothes were getting ready, he broke out in a manner which, considering his extreme weakness, astonished us all, saying,

"I'll praise my Maker while I've breath," &c.

At another time, he seemed wishful to speak, but could only say, "Nature is—Nature is—" one added, "nearly exhausted: but you, dear Sir, are entering into a *new* nature, and into the society of blessed spirits." He answered, "Certainly." Then clasping his hands together, he said, "Jesus—" with other words which we could not distinctly hear; but his lips continued moving a considerable time, as if in fervent prayer. When he was set in his chair, he appeared to change for death: yet, he uttered with a weak voice, "Lord, thou givest strength to those that can speak, and to those that cannot: speak, Lord, to all our hearts, and



let them know that thou loofest tongues." He then fung,

"To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," &c.

His voice then failed; and after gasping for breath, he said, "Now we have done;—let us go." We then laid him on the bed, from which he rose no more. Having taken a short sleep, he desired all the family to be called together to PRAY and PRAISE. When we rose from our knees, he took us each by the hand, drew us near, and kissed us; saying to each, "Farewell, farewell." After this, he seemed as if sinking into the arms of death. He strove to speak several times, but those lips which had long been the means of feeding thousands, were no longer able to convey their accustomed sounds! Nevertheless, contrary to all our expectation, and when we even thought him expiring, he cried out, so loud as to be heard by all in the room, "THE BEST OF ALL IS, GOD IS WITH US." And then, lifting up his dying arm, and waving round his hand in token of victory, he again raised his voice with a holy triumph, not to be expressed, repeating the same heart-reviving words, "THE BEST OF ALL IS, GOD IS WITH US." Then laying composed awhile, we heard him say with a gentle voice, "*The clouds drop fatness:—The Lord is with us; the God of JACOB is our refuge.*" Seeing several persons standing by his bed-side, he asked, "Who are these?" I answered, Sir, all these are your friends: they are come to rejoice with you:—You are going to receive your crown! He replied, "*It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.*"

It now grew late in the evening, so that all the company withdrew, except myself and two more, who continued with him till the morning. His exertions the preceeding day quite exhausted his strength, so that he could say nothing through the whole night, except, "I'll praise, I'll praise, I'll praise—" which words he repeated, at least, some scores of times. About seven o'clock in the morning of March 2, (the day on which he died) he seemed very wishful to say something about the love of God, and of his willingness to save all mankind, &c. But his speech faltered so, that we could not understand one half of what he appeared anxious to convey. He said, "Where is my sermon ON THE LOVE OF GOD?—Take it and spread it abroad:—Give it to every one." (In consequence of which, we had ten thousand of them printed to give away.) His faithful friend, Mr. Bradford, then prayed with him; and, on rising from our knees, he said, "Farewell!" which was the last word he was heard to articulate. As we perceived the closing scene drew very

near, about half past nine o'clock, Mr. *Bradford*, Mr. *Whitfield*, Mr. *Broadbent*, Mr. *Brackenbury*, Mr. *Horton*, Doctor *Whithead*, Miss *Wesley*, Miss *Ritchie*, my wife, myself, and my little *James*, all kneeled upon our knees around the bed of this man of God ; while his breath, gently decreasing, ceased. So did he, without a lingering groan, *gather up his feet in the presence of his children*.—What we felt at that moment is inexpressible !—The weight of glory which seemed to rest on the dying countenance of our beloved Pastor, Father, and Friend, as he entered the joy of his Lord, filled our hearts with holy dread, mixed with ineffable sweetness !—*God was surely in that place !* Just as Mr. *Wesley* breathed his last, Mr. *Bradford* was saying, “ Lift up your heads, O ye gates ! and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors, and let this HEIR OF GLORY IN ! ” while I could not forbear repeating aloud those lines :—

“ Waiting to receive thy spirit,  
Lo ! the Saviour stands above ;  
Shews the purchase of his merit,  
Reaches out the CROWN OF LOVE.”

This awful event had a good effect on our society in London. Our chapels were much crowded, the classes and bands were exceeding lively, and the Lord added daily to his church ; so that when I came to visit the classes in May, I found upwards of an hundred new members, and nearly an equal number of souls who had, within three months, tasted of the *pardoning* or the *pure* love of God.

I finished the last class just in time to see my respected fellow-labourer, Mr. *Duncan Wright*, breathe his last.—Mr. *Broadbent* still being sick, I was now left without a helper, except my worthy friend Mr. *Bradford*, who did every thing I could wish or expect from a man devoted to the work of God. And, notwithstanding the critical situation in which things *then* stood, from the time of our venerable Father's death to the ensuing Conference, we went on *well* in every sense. I don't know I ever had more liberty in recommending the SINNER'S FRIEND, and FULL REDEMPTION IN HIS BLOOD, than during that time. And although my *various* labours were oppressive to the body, yet all was rendered delightful by the heart-felt presence of an approving God, and the truly christian affection and friendship of some thousands of the best people in the world.

But the following year exhibited a very different scene. It was natural to expect that Methodism would be thrown into a state of considerable agitation, whenever it should

please God to call hence its ancient Founder. It was my lot to be where that agitation began : and, although I laboured for *PEACE* as if my own life had depended upon it, my proceedings have been represented through the nation, by those I was bound in *honour* and *conscience* to oppose, in a very different light : charging the London lawsuit, and I don't know what, to my account !—The brevity of this little work forbids the insertion of several manuscripts which are calculated to prove at large, that I have been *exceedingly ill used* in that vexatious piece of business. I believe few have suffered more through *down-right misrepresentation* than I have : and perhaps in the esteem of some who will never know me, till we meet at the judgment-seat of Christ ! Were I in a private line of life, neither *malicious tongues*, nor *pens dipt in gall*, would give me the least uneasiness : but as I stand related to the public, those words of the apostle come with double weight : *Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.* Waving, therefore, a thousand little circumstances and altercations relative to Dr. W. and several other things which came in, as it were, by the by ; and without reflecting upon any man's character, as I believe several worthy persons on both sides, were inadvertently involved in that unhappy contest ; I will, at the request of my friends, give a concise, but faithful narrative of the leading facts from the beginning of this affair. And then, let every man who has heard of those *strange things* which happened in London, form what judgment he pleases on the part I took.

A few persons of considerable opulence, both in London and Bristol, and perhaps in some other places, who had the honour of Mr. Wesley's friendship during his life-time, entertained a notion, that after his death, they should be able so to new-model our system, as to form a committee of private gentlemen, similar to that at the head of the late Mr. Whitefield's connection :—that this committee should be the dernier resort of both preachers and people ; and that the stations of the preachers, and every thing else, should be under their control, the same as under Mr. Wesley's. The trust-deeds of the only two chapels we *then* had in Bristol, being entirely upon that plan, encouraged them much ; as did that of the New Chapel in London, before we got relief in consequence of the lawsuit. And the manner in which this power was soon exercised in each place, towards both preachers and people, will not easily be forgotten.



But prior to all this, and when it was mentioned to me, I endeavoured to shew the impracticability of the measure. Nevertheless, their expectations remained sanguine, inasmuch that three gentlemen were delegated to attend the first Conference after Mr. *Wesley's* death, to see how far it was likely they should take the lead in our affairs. The Conference, however, was unwilling to give them that power which they thought they had a right to ; in consequence of which, they returned exceedingly dissatisfied.

I now foresaw my way was likely to be very rough, and requested the Conference would give me some directions how to proceed ; and especially with respect to the iron chest, where were deposited the trust-deeds of sundry chapels both in town and country. Their order to me was, " Deliver the keys to no one : but if the Trustees of any chapel apply for their own deed, let them have it." The trustees of the New Chapel applied first, and got theirs.— But after this, they applied for the keys of the chest also ! Having lived in habits of intimate friendship with the gentleman who was delegated to make this demand, I felt myself in a very unpleasant predicament. I told him, he *knew* the injunction laid upon me by the Conference, and begged he would excuse me : at least, till I had mentioned it to my brethren the preachers, leaders, and stewards ; as I always acted by joint counsel and advice. About a week after, the same gentleman came again, and expostulated with me to discard the authority of Conference, and act with them ; in which case, I should secure the friendship of many respectable families, who would not let me suffer. Whereas, if I did not comply, he could assure me, many of my best friends, would from henceforth become my determined enemies. I replied, (as Mr. *George Whitfield* can testify, for in his presence was this, and much more of a similar kind advanced) Sir, my honour and conscience are both concerned : I am sorry to offend you, or any of my friends ; but I cannot become a traitor to secure the friendship of any one : and I *must* be such, both to the Conference and the London society, if I do as you desire me. I hoped, therefore, he would excuse me, until I was authorised by those who committed to me the trust :—That if he could obtain *their* leave, I would do it with the greatest cheerfulness. Upon which he went away much offended ; saying, " You shall hear from us another day in a way you will not like !" I replied, I was very sorry for it ; but as I did not act for myself alone, I must abide by the consequence.

From that time, they tried every means they could devise, if *possible*, to collect something that would appear like a charge against me : and to this end wrote letters (the originals of which I have now by me) to every circuit, both in England and in Ireland, where I had laboured for near twenty years past :—Wonderfully consistent with that charity *which hopeth all things !* My friends cannot more *despise* such a measure, than I, by the grace of God, *defied* the contrivers of it : For, although in ten thousand instances I may have been unfaithful to my God, and even *neglected my own vineyard to serve theirs*, yet, I rejoice to *know* I am not in the power of any person upon earth. And, I challenge the world in general, and the Methodist connection in particular, whose ready servant I still am, to put their finger, if they can, upon *one* black spot in my moral character, since I first set out to preach the gospel among them.

These gentlemen failing in the above, a little before the London Conference in 1792, they made a demand on me for fifty pounds of annual rent upon the preacher's dwelling-house, or else to quit the premises. And after this, they came attended by a lawyer and a broker, to take an inventory of all the household furniture, and add it to their trust-estate. The society stewards and others, being acquainted with their design, requested me to suffer no such thing ; because all those goods belonged to the society, and the stewards, *not* the trustees, were accountable. As I now found myself between two fires, and both these claims being quite new in London, and concerned the society more than me, I left it to *them* to manage ; which they did from that day forward, during the whole process in law and otherwise ; by a committee chosen from among themselves, consisting of upwards of an hundred of the principal men in the society, including the leaders and stewards, with five of the New Chapel trustees. The claim for rent being founded upon a deficiency in the annual income of the Chapel, and ninety pounds being then wanted for ground-rent ; at the request of my brethren, I laid it before the congregation the ensuing Sabbath ; shewing them their danger of being involved in law, if the above sum were not produced ; as also ways and means found to keep the premises clear in future.—That very day ONE HUNDRED GUINEAS were collected ; and afterwards security offered the trustees again and again, to any amount they should demand ; *only* let things go on the same way they had done in Mr. Wesley's life-time : and *especially* so as not to interfere in the appointment of the preachers.

I did hope matters would *then* have taken a favourable turn ; but, alas ! the lust of power, inflamed by the demon of discord, continued still to work ; so that the next thing I heard of was, an application made by the major part of the trustees to the court of exchequer for ejectments ; and here the lawsuit began. For these being served by a lawyer's clerk upon the preachers, to quit the house built for them by the subscriptions of the people ; the minority trustees, with the advice of the above-mentioned committee, saw it necessary to put in an appearance against the said ejectments. God alone knows what I felt upon this occasion ! Sensible of the reproach which must necessarily attend the Methodists going to law one with another ; I opened my mind to a few confidential friends, and we agreed, *rather than proceed in law*, to open a subscription for another chapel ; towards which I gladly offered fifty pounds ; and in less than two days, upwards of a thousand pounds were subscribed !—This did not look *much* like a desire for law, either in me or my friends. Ground was also offered ; but after all, it was overruled, yet not by *my* will : and I *still* doubt whether it were wise to stop it. For my own part, I would rather give up all the fine chapels in the kingdom, than either follow them into courts of law, or become a tool to serve any party upon earth. And I think it would redound much more to the glory of God and our own comfort, again to publish *on earth, peace and good will towards men*, even in the streets and lanes of the cities ; or, in barns and country cottages, as at the beginning ; rather than become a reproach and a by-word to a heathen world, through our intestine broils and unchristian contentions !—And, let it be remembered, THAT CHAPEL WAS NOT PUT INTO CHANCERY, TILL AFTER MY OFFICE AS SUPERINTENDENT CEASED. The preachers being all met in London, where the whole took place, I sent a note to the trustees, requesting, if they, or any other person, had any charge to prefer, I was ready to answer it. But they brought NONE. The whole, as far as it respected *me*, was then laid before the Conference, by my fellow-labourers and others, who all saw me in the deep waters, and were privy to all my steps. The Conference were not only *satisfied* on the occasion, but voted me their thanks. And the sympathetic affection manifested to me by *some* of my brethren on that occasion, is still engraven on my heart. The Conference then appointed a successor in my place : and I believe, both *they* and *himself* hoped he would soon be able to settle the business ; but time proved the contrary. However, I never interfered after this, more or less.



But, as strange liberties had been taken with my character, it was thought necessary I should be near the spot, in order to answer any *unjust* charges which might be brought; and therefore I was stationed at Spitalfields, scarcely one mile from the New Chapel. Some in the opposition wished me farther off; especially one of the leading characters, who I knew had a private pique against me. AS PEACE was my chief object, I availed myself of this circumstance, and requested the Conference to make the trustees an offer to remove me to a country circuit, with this proviso, that they should not proceed any farther in law against the society. A note was interchanged, in which they promised, if I left the city, they should have nothing more to say to *me*; but were nevertheless *determined* to proceed with the law. Upon which, and because I had nothing to fear from them, my appointment was confirmed. The next day they gave the Conference a full proof of their grand design: namely, not to govern the temporal concerns *alone*, but the spirituals also—TO CONTROL THE PULPIT. Accordingly, there came an order to me, not from the COURT, but from their OWN SEPARATE AUTHORITY, to preach no more in that Chapel! However, being one of the committee appointed in Mr. Wesley's WILL to preach there, I knew it was not in *their* power to restrain me, as the Lord Chancellor afterwards declared in court. Nevertheless, for *peace* sake, and to convince all men where the bar to a reconciliation laid, I voluntarily gave up my right, and on condition the Conference would advise it, I declared, about one hour before they broke up, I will not again enter that pulpit for *one year*, except my fellow-labourers now appointed, and the society which attends at the New Chapel, see it expedient, and *both* require me so to do. I sacredly kept my engagement, nor did I preach there again for upwards of seven months. But neither did *this* answer any end; except that it exceedingly grieved the people at large; and therefore I was recalled by the general voice of the preachers and society, to fill my place in the said Chapel as usual. And a blessed season it was, when on Sunday forenoon, March 10, 1793, a clergyman having first read prayers, I preached from Prov. iv. 18, *The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

It should be observed, the preceding Conference was no sooner over, but fresh ejections were served upon the new appointed preachers, not on *me*, and being withstood as before, the major part of the trustees proceeded to yet more

hostile measures in the court of exchequer, where they filled an enormous bill of three hundred and forty-nine sheets. From this court, the minority part of the trust and society, applied to the court of chancery for relief ; where the affair remained in contest for three years and upwards. Nor was it at last settled by LAW ; but after all parties were heartily sick of it, by the interference of two of our worthy and senior brethren, and with the help of other kind friends, the matter was compromised. The whole law expence, both sides included, amounted to about twelve hundred pounds : —To counter-balance this, a chapel that cost eight thousand pounds, is now, by the articles of agreement, so far secured to the society, that the trustees are not in future to interfere with the conference appointment of *any* preacher for his first year ; except the stewards and men class-leaders of three years' standing, are first incorporated with them, and so form a majority of the whole. While, on the other hand, full power is granted the trustees, to manage all the temporal affairs of the premises :—A right this, which I am persuaded would never have been disputed, had not the other been involved. But, what is very pleasing after all, and much to their honour, *both* sides have very liberally subscribed towards the above expence, and I wish all the contending parties in the Methodist connection were now as quiet as they are.

Having given my friends a clew to unravel this mysterious piece of business, I am content.—If any *still* suffer themselves to be misled, and imbibe *silly prejudices* for they know not what, I cannot help it :—*they* must look to that ! Many are ready to fix blame, where they took no active part ; especially if any thing turn up unpleasant. I would only observe, when once we have passed a series of complicated affairs, and seen the issue, it is easy to direct. But let matters be considered in their prior situation, and, perhaps those who are most forward in their censures, would have found themselves equally at a loss how to proceed. It must be allowed, *I* stood, as it were, IN THE FORE-FRONT OF THE HOTTEST BATTLE ; and the whole line of artillery played upon me for a time, as the *only* enemy to those antimethodistical projects ! But since then, numbers of my fellow-labourers have, in *their* turn, been as deeply engaged as ever I was. Places might here be named in great plenty, but I forbear. And notwithstanding some of our most respectable brethren have been stationed at those places, it has not been in *their* power, any more than it was in *mine*, either

TO QUENCH THE FLAME, OR ESCAPE PLENTY OF REPROACH.\*

But, O ! how condescending is the Lord !—the walls of our Jerusalem are built, *even in troublesome times*. Great numbers have been converted to God in some of those very places where the tide of opposition run the highest. I found also in London, at the end of two years, an increase of five hundred and ten members. And in these kingdoms, during the last three years, we have not added less than twenty thousand souls.—Praise the Lord ! Some say, “The Methodists are a fallen people.” I believe there are *many fallen Methodists* ; but I cannot believe the *Methodists are a fallen people* :—far from it. Beside, many of those who at present trouble the body, although members when first placed in offices of trust among us, have not belonged to our society for several years.

In Aug. 1792, when I went to Spitalfields, I entered upon a more arduous task than I expected. Being desired by the Conference, I got the lease renewed for twenty-one years, the chapel thoroughly repaired, and furnished a dwelling-house for a preacher and his family. The expence, of course, was very considerable. But, laying it before our kind friends in and near London, I collected upwards of three hundred pounds ; which, with a little more help, nearly cleared the whole. The chapel is large and commodious, computed to contain near three thousand people, and the Lord hath greatly blessed the congregation ever since. I felt an uncommon attachment to the numerous inhabitants of that poor neighbourhood ; and could have rejoiced to spend my days among them, had it been the order of God. But, alas ! by the time I was comfortably settled in my new habitation, Conference drew near, when I was called from my quiet retreat.

In the year 1793, I was appointed to labour at Birmingham, where I found the society in a most distracted state. Before I arrived, a printed hand-bill was in circulation, setting forth “Reasons for dividing the society.” With some difficulty, I got the most discontented together ; and, after reasoning the case for near three hours, had hopes that matters would have subsided. And I still think that breach might have been healed, had not a certain person just then come in the way, whom the leaders of the opposing party

\* The London society sent forth a printed Letter, testifying their entire approbation of the part I acted during the very trying state of affairs in that city.—Any person who never saw that Letter, can have it with pleasure, by applying to me.



determined to employ as their pastor. In consequence of which, one hundred and thirteen left us. And why? Because the Conference had agreed, "The Lord's supper should be administered where the society was unanimous for it, and would not be content without it:" which of course, could not effect THEM. After using every effort to reconcile them which LOVE could suggest; my brethren and I went on as if no such difference existed; and the Lord blessed our labours.

Two months of my second year in Birmingham were scarcely elapsed, when those solemn words, spoken to *Ezekiel*, were awfully verified:—*Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke!!* Awful indeed to me, and far exceeding all that words can paint!—I forbear to enlarge here upon that most tremendous conflict, when called, at an hour's warning, to part with one of the best women the world ever saw! But as I have published an account, both of her experience, character, and death, with all the circumstances at large, I refer the reader to the two pamphlets which contain the same: recommending a third also, containing twenty-nine of her most Spiritual Letters.

After their dear mother, it pleased the Lord to take to himself two of my seven lovely children. Three of the remaining five being fixed at Bristol and Kingswood, I felt a great desire to be near them: and accordingly, in the year 1795, I was stationed at Bradford, Wilts. Here too, I found a party spirit had run high all the year past; and one of the best societies in the county was rent thereby, into two nearly equal parts. I no sooner came to Trowbridge, where this catastrophe took place, than I went in search of the poor sheep who *had been scattered in the dark and cloudy day*: and, thank God, we had the happiness of seeing some of them return to the fold. Several of the rest are our constant hearers, and behave with christian respect. In Bradford we were likely to be left without either chapel or dwelling-house; but neither time nor pains were lost until I saw both secured to the society. We live in GREAT PEACE. Yet I am sorry to find so little increase. However, I see it well to go in the line of duty, and leave the event to him who saith, *In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.*

After struggling with my small family near two years, I found I must necessarily take one of these steps;—either quit

the itinerant life ; place my children among strangers, without even a home to visit me at ; or try to find another help-mate, capable of sharing so weighty a charge. After mature deliberation and fervent prayer to God, I believe he chose for me again, all things considered, one of the fittest persons upon earth, who is every way calculated to make both me and mine happy. Therefore, on August 26, 1796, I entered again into the married state.

My present companion is second daughter of Mr. *Jonathan Roberts*, silver-manufacturer in Sheffield. Her mother truly feared the Lord, and took pains to instil into the minds of her six children, the seeds of early piety. She died when they were young ; and their father being of a different mind, those good impressions soon fled away. However, being, in *his* way, a kind parent, and in prosperous circumstances, he let none of his children want for education. But *Sarah*, now my wife, no sooner returned from school, than instead of the Bible and other books of divinity, she was suffered to read only novels and romances : so that although she was wonderfully preserved from all the grosser vices of the age, she soon began to take delight in dress, plays, dancing, and such like. Till, going with a party, from motives of curiosity, to hear singing at a Methodist chapel on a Christmas-day, it pleased God, in the seventeenth year of her age, to lay fast hold on her conscience. Her conviction was very deep. Not being suffered to come near the people of God, and no spiritual help at home, she was almost in despair for eighteen months : when it pleased the Lord to work a glorious change ; so that from being constrained to cry out day and night, oppressed with sin and guilty horrors, she was filled with joy unspeakable, and her happy soul, ravished with the transcendent beauties of a SAVIOUR, became “all PRAISE, all MEEKNESS, and all LOVE!”

Her once loving father, no longer able to bear this, after trying both flattery and severity without effect, put it to her choice, to renounce her religion, or quit his house !—After a hard struggle, she chose the latter. And, although she has since made every submission she could, with a good conscience, he has never spoken to her from that time ; nor will he receive or answer her letters. Some complain of trials : but what would they think of this ? In her distress, these words were applied with peculiar sweetness to her heart, *When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.* And accordingly, while in her state of exile, a kind uncle by her mother’s side, Mr. *Winter*, died ; and did not

forget in his LAST WILL, to act a father's part. Being providentially directed to Birmingham, she lived with a Methodist family there ; and like one of old, was entrusted with the care and chief management of the house, until such time as she came to take the charge of mine ; which was about a year and a half before our marriage. Gratitude now constrains me to thank God for the event : although I sometimes fear her constitution has received irretrievable injury from her various sufferings, both of body and mind.

### THE CONCLUSION.

I have now lived forty-seven years in this poor changing world. Thirty-three of these I have spent in habits of intimacy with the Methodists ; and about twenty-seven as their servant in the gospel. Before I left home, I thought an itinerent life was calculated above all others to promote a growth in grace, as it cuts off all pecuniary advantages and secular concerns. But experience hath since taught me, that few are more critically situated than a Methodist Preacher : especially those who are called to superintend in our connection: These need, not only much wisdom and prudence, but peculiar resolution and firmness of mind ; and above all, a close walk with HIM who hath said, *I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness*. I have ever had the happiness to go hand in hand with the societies among whom I have laboured ; and their liberties and privileges still lie near my heart. My greatest difficulties have always risen from aspiring individuals ; who, although but *one, two, or three* in a thousand, arrogate to themselves that popular phrase, THE PEOPLE. My past exercises, however, have taught me how to shape my future conduct towards such characters. Let those who *can* serve their purposes, do so :—I shall leave both them and their servants to him who is best Judge of their motives : and in time to come, endeavour to pass on my way QUIETLY. I feel abundant cause to be ashamed before God, that I have not been more holy and more useful in his work. However, one thing I *can* say, the same principle with which I set out, continues to this day. I could then say,

“ The love of Christ doth me constrain,  
To seek the wandering souls of men.”

And the language of my heart still is—

“ My life, my blood I here present,  
If for thy truth they may be spent ;  
Thy faithful witness will I be :  
'Tis fixt : I can do all through thee !”



I observed in the former part of this account, my justification was peculiarly clear; so was the evidence of sanctification. And as I received the former of these by faith alone, so did I the latter. But I did not retain the witness of full salvation long: yet the Lord has graciously restored it to me at different times: but as often have I proved unfaithful, and by giving way to unbelief, have been robbed of my confidence, as it related to that grace. The review sinks me in self-abasement at his feet. I feel I am unworthy of the least of his mercies. I see it necessary to recur daily to the *blood of sprinkling*: and as the Lord has often corrected me in mercy, so I trust he will more than ever make me a *partaker of his holiness*.

In the beginning of my labours, I sapped the foundation of a good constitution: and troubles of a later date would probably have given the finishing stroke; only the Lord has mercifully granted me a little respite in this quiet corner; where a clear country air, and an excellent nurse, have greatly contributed to my restoration; so that I enjoy a better state of health at present, than for several years past. Nevertheless, death advances equally swift, in health as in sickness: Well:—Let the summons reach me when and where it will, I feel a full persuasion, I SHALL BE FOR EVER WITH THE LORD. Having so much of my treasure already above, and more on the way, HEAVEN seems doubly sweet! I long to follow them, *who through faith and patience inherit the promises*. O that I may tread in their steps; being filled, as they were, with that LOVE which beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things. My very soul hungereth and thirsteth for this:—I see nothing so desirable as HOLINESS. And I trust the time is near, when the Lord will appear to make an end of sin in ME—in ALL! *Then shall Ephraim no more envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim:—Neither shall they hurt nor destroy in all my HOLY MOUNTAIN; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. He who testifieth these things, saith, SURELY, I COME QUICKLY. AMEN. EVEN SO COME, LORD JESUS.*

FINIS.

